Palmtop

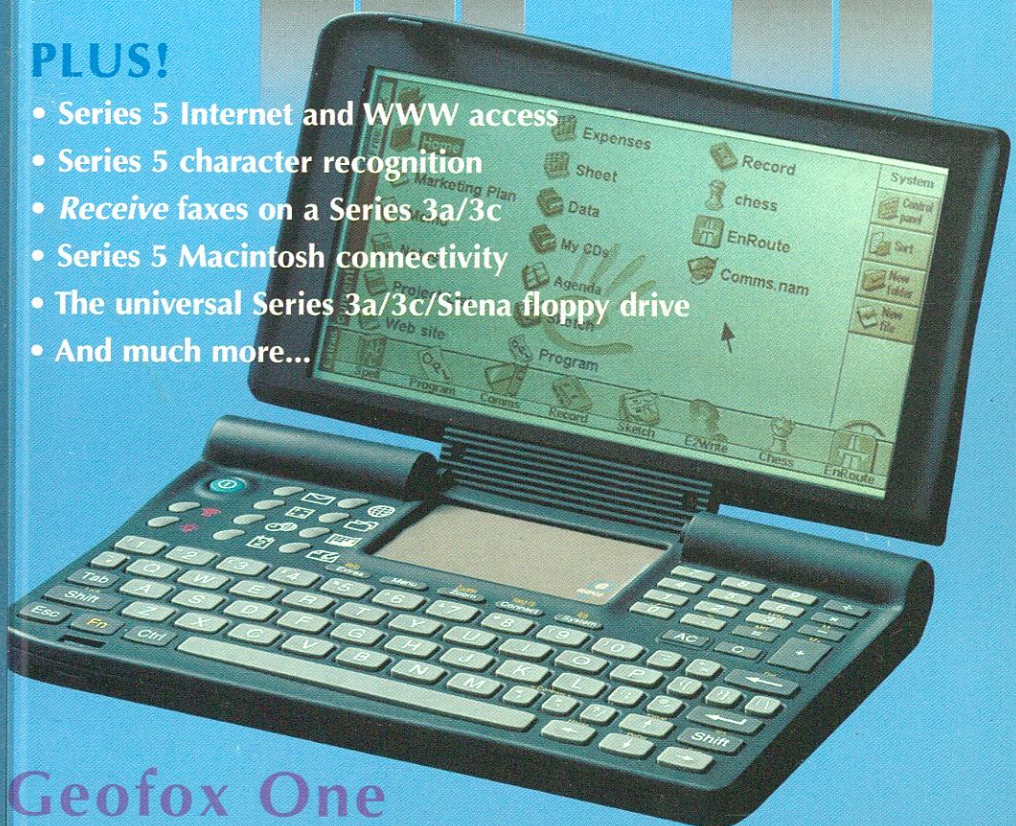
The journal for today's Psion user

Issue 15 Bimonthly

PSI-CLONE?

PLUS!

- Series 5 Internet and WWW access
- Series 5 character recognition
- *Receive* faxes on a Series 3a/3c
- Series 5 Macintosh connectivity
- The universal Series 3a/3c/Siena floppy drive
- And much more...



Geofox One

The first EPOC32 based Psion-compatible — Full review inside!

Purple is ...

...being able to choose from Europe's widest range of applications for handheld computers.

Allegro for the Psion Series 5

Allegro is the fast and reliable hand-writing recognition package for the Series 5. It provides an alternative to keyboard input using the standard pen, supporting all in-built applications and those applications that adhere to platform standards. This single character hand-writing recognition package enables users to form characters intuitively, requiring them only to re-learn a few characters. Allegro demonstrates an extremely high degree of recognition accuracy and supports punctuation, digits, symbols and international characters.

5 Pack for the Psion Series 5

...provides five fun ways to test your strategy and skill on your handheld computer. HomeRun, the classic card solitaire with a whole new dimension. Checkers continues to be a long-standing favourite with board game afficionados throughout the world. Yacht is the classic dice game for poker fans. Theole is a challenging Reversi master. Enigma requires you to use your deductive skills to reveal the hidden code. Purchase this selection of counter, card and dice-based games for hours of enjoyment.

For full information about Purple Software, its products & services and their world-wide availability, visit us at: **http://www.purplesoft.com**

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Submissions

Any contributions of material published within the pages of *PALMTOP* (excluding 'On The Net') will earn the author a minimum of one free issue added to their subscription. If you wish to write feature articles for the magazine then please contact the editor to discuss your ideas.

Back Issues

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General

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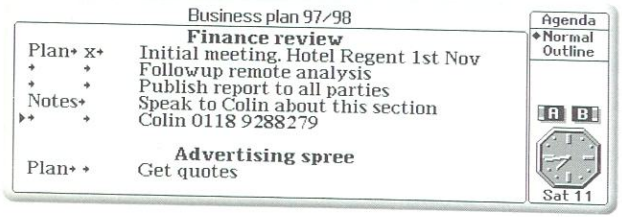

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Editorial

Just as I was beginning to wonder what to put on the front cover of this issue, it arrived. *It* of course being Geofox Ltd's new EPOC32 machine, the Geofox One. I distinctly remember discussing the very subject of Series 5 'compatibles' with Psion at the Series 5 press launch back in June, and everyone seemed quite convinced that no such scenario was likely. The consensus was that all licensing agreements would be limited to 'smart phone' devices (like the forthcoming Philips units), at least for the foreseeable future. Anyway, the truth was slightly different, as Geofox Ltd had been liaising closely with Psion's software division for almost a year. The resulting machine is considerably larger than the Series 5 (though a similar weight), and is aimed more squarely at the laptop computer market.

Almost regardless of how successful the product turns out to be in its own right, the Geofox One marks the dawn of a new era for Psion—the era of the 'Psion compatible'. Many people may wish to refer to it as a 'Psion Clone', but the term really feels wrong in this instance. Clones are, by definition, supposed to be close approximations of the original—identical if we take the term in its strict biological sense. PC-compatibles almost all have screens, keyboards, etc. that are barely distinguishable from each other, but not so with the Geofox. The Geofox could never be mistaken for a Series 5, even though it should run all Series 5 software in the same way that PC-compatibles all run 'IBM-PC' software quite happily.

In many cases a potential Series 5 purchaser will have little interest in a Geofox One, and once consumers develop an appreciation of the relative merits of the two machines the reverse will probably be true also. Why so? Well, firstly the Geofox is not a pocketable computer—unless you count large coat pockets. It's not even terribly comfortable to carry in one hand—it stretches the average hand span just to grip it. It's not impossible to use it while gripped between two hands, but it certainly feels unwieldy when used in this way. The Geofox One really belongs in a briefcase or handbag, or on a desk or airline tray table.

Apart from size issues the Geofox feels very different in several ways: the keyboard is very different, with many of the special keys in different places, and the Series 5's touch screen has been abandoned in favour of a more laptop computer-like 'mouse pad'. It has conventional buttons rather than on-

screen touch keys for selecting the built-in applications, a separate numeric calculator-style keypad for fast(er) entry of numbers, and a single PC (PCMCIA) card slot in place of the usual pair of CompactFlash slots.

From a more strategic point of view the differences are less significant. For the long-term expansion of the Psion (or more specifically EPOC32) platform the most crucial element is that of proliferation. As Windows CE (and others) develop and improve, Psion's best strategy is to get as many consumers as possible using Psion's software rather than Microsoft's. It doesn't much matter whether that software is running on a Psion computer, a Geofox, or any other variant that appears on the market in the coming months.

Apple Computers missed the boat at the vital stage in desktop computer development back in the 1980s. At the time they had a product vastly superior to the crude MS-DOS used in 'IBM compatibles' of the time, but by refusing to license their operating system to 'clone' makers (and keeping their prices too high) they were sidelined by the onslaught of cheap PC-compatibles that now dominate the PC market.

If Psion can get half a dozen other manufacturers producing Series 5 compatibles over the next year then it will help to manoeuvre them into a similar position to the one Microsoft found themselves in as their sales gradually left Apple in the dust.

Of course, much of the proliferation issue isn't so much about sales as it is about *confidence*. Customers like to see that the goods they're buying are approved and sanctioned by other people too—especially when spending hundreds of pounds. It's all very well being a dedicated Psion user, but if almost everyone else is buying Windows CE then it's difficult to convince all but the most righteous to buy a Psion instead. In the real world, product superiority alone is by no means a guarantee of success (look at Betamax versus VHS videotapes). Ultimately the likes of Geofox might just be the deciding factor that ensures Psion's long-term future.

Steve Clack - December 1997

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Steve Litchfield - Senior Contributor

Rosemary Rolfe - Distribution Manager

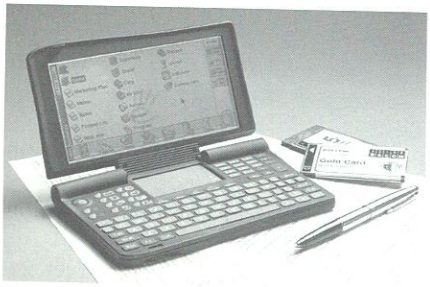
Thanks... to all the contributors whose names appear within the magazine, particularly Stephen Murgan and Rick Andrews for their regular contributions. Thanks also to all those who have kindly supplied their products for evaluation.

Palmtop News

The latest hot gossip on what's happening in the Psion world

Psion Software licenses EPOC32 to Geofox Ltd

The Geofox One, the first ever Psion-compatible computer has just been released. George Grey, CEO of Geofox Ltd, explains, "After extensive research with users in this sector, we have designed a machine which combines the best features of handheld



computers. EPOC32 was our first choice operating system for the Geofox One and our partnership with Psion Software has enabled us to bring a state of the art machine into market in a very short space of time. Geofox One is aimed at executives who may already have a PC or laptop PC, but want something small and light to carry around, offering the user a viable alternative to a laptop PC, particularly for mobile e-mail and Internet access."

Stephen Randall, Joint Managing Director, Psion Software PLC commented, "Geofox have identified a significant gap in the market for a product which comes between a notebook and handheld device. As a robust, flexible and established communications platform, EPOC32 is the ideal operating system for the Geofox One."

The Geofox One is available in 4MB and 16MB variants with additional connectivity options (see review starting on page 57 for full details) with prices from £385 to £599 including VAT. The Geofox machines are only available directly from Geofox Ltd, and there are no immediate plans for the machines to become available through conventional retail outlets.

Contact: Geofox Ltd 0845 8440109
(see advertisement on page 112)

Series 5 sales reach 40,000 per month

Since its launch in July, worldwide sales of the Series 5 have reached approximately 40,000 units per month.

"Sales and profitability of the Series 5 have gone far beyond our expectations," said Rob Solow, buyer for the handheld category at J&R Computer and Music World. "Customer demand remains strong for the Series 5 even while competitors have had to take drastic promotional measures to increase sales. Psion by far has been the number one selling handheld unit in its class."

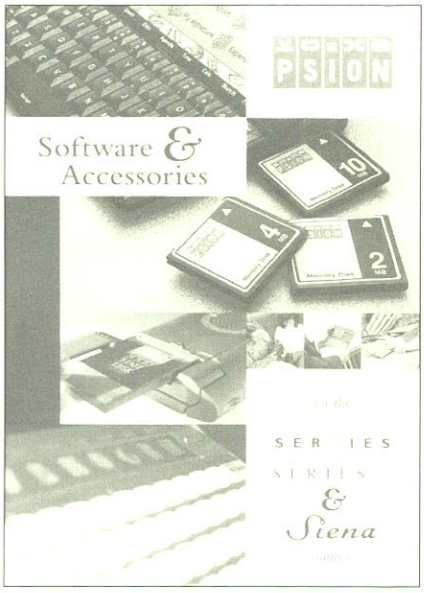
Series 5 Internet access appears at last

Psion's Message Suite for the Series 5 is now available from their World Wide Web site. The freely downloadable package (around 1.3MB) offers e-mail, WWW and fax communications—see 'A Closer Look' in this issue for a full review. A recent update to the package allows installation via non-PC computers.

http://www.psion.com/

PsiWin 2.01

Following some recent bug fixes, Psion have release version 2.01 of PsiWin for the Series 5. The free software can be downloaded from Psion's own World Wide Web site. Users should be warned that the full download is approximately 14MB in size.



New Software Catalogue

The 1997/98 edition of Psion's Software and Accessories catalogue has recently appeared. The catalogue contains 60 pages of information about what's on the market for Psion users, and is available free of charge from most Psion dealers, or directly from Psion.

Psion wins Byte award

Psion have recently won the 1997 *Byte Editors' Choice Award of Distinction* for the Series 5. This follows another award for *Best Hardware*

System at the Comdex Asia-Asia Computer Weekly Awards 1997. Byte quoted "Amidst all the razzle dazzle about Windows CE devices, Psion released an impressive alternative; the Series 5 boasts a keyboard that's well thought out and EPOC, its slick operating system software."

Psion appear on BBC Watchdog programme

Following numerous complaints from customers the Series 5 appeared on the BBC's Watchdog consumer programme in November. Complaints were from users who had purchased machines with the early 1.00 ROM version, and were receiving no solution other than the offer of a £50 upgrade to ROM version 1.1 in 1998.

Following the programme Psion agreed to offer a free upgrade to the 1.01 bug fix ROM release, and gave a freephone hotline number in the UK. Callers will have their ROM 1.00 Series 5 collected by courier and returned with the completed upgrade within a matter of days.

Contact: Psion Hotline 0800 0186637

Series 5 ROM update now shipping

All Series 5 machines are now being shipped with ROM release 1.01, an interim bug fix prior to the 1.1 chargeable upgrade due in the first quarter of 1998. Users who purchased ROM version 1.00 machines (those shipped up to around September 1997) can call the number in the previous paragraph to obtain a free of charge upgrade.

Prudential licenses Mobile Pages

Mobile Software, producers of the *Mobile Pages Database Generator* have just announced a 3-year licensing agreement with Prudential. Within the agreement, Prudential has licensed Mobile Software's well known Mobile Pages software to enable its 5,500 strong sales force to access large amounts of product related information, whether from the office, when visiting clients, while travelling or from home. The software will be used entirely on Psion Series 3 computers. Prudential is the largest life insurance company in the UK, with assets of £115 billion.

Palmtop will be reviewing a special version of the Mobile Pages Database Generator, aimed at personal and small business users, in the next issue.

Contact: Mobile Software UK
Tel: 0181 9060002

EPOC32 gets handwriting recognition

Purple Software have licensed the Papyrus handwriting recognition system

for their new Allegro recognition software for the Series 5. See 'A Closer Look' in this issue for a full review.

Contact: Purple Software
Tel: 0171 3877777

Psion improves Apple Macintosh support

Psion have now released improved connectivity to Apple Macintosh computers in the form of *PsiMac* for the Series 3a/3c/Siena (reviewed in issue 14), and *MacConnect* for the Series 5 (reviewed in this issue).

No Quicken until 1998

Series 5 users hoping to get their bank accounts into order with Psion's *Pocket Quicken* will have to wait until 1998 for the software to be released. We plan to feature a full review of this and shareware bank account management packages for the Series 5 in the next issue.

Series 5 software now appearing

After a slow start, commercial software for the Series 5 is now beginning to appear in greater quantities. Several new titles are now available (see 'A Closer Look' in this issue for full reviews), with more titles due by early 1998.

32MB CF disks available

Larger capacity CompactFlash disks suitable for the Series 5 are currently appearing almost every month, with Simple Technology cards now available in 24MB and 32MB variants. Expect even larger capacity cards in 1998.

Contact: Clove Technology
Tel: 01202 302796

Palmtop CD-ROM due

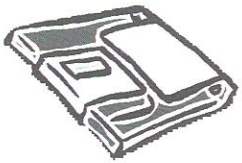
All subscriptions and resubscriptions after 1st December will receive a FREE CD-ROM containing hundreds of megabytes of software and useful information for Psion users. The CD, produced as a collaboration between the *3-Lib Shareware Library* and *Palmtop* magazine, will contain almost every piece of shareware and freeware ever produced (more than 2000 items) for the Psion Series 3/3a/3c, Siena and Series 5 computers. The disk will also incorporate valuable reference data in the form of FAQs and online reference documents.

The disk will also include Psion's latest *PsiWin* and *Message Suite* software, a Psion screen saver and puzzle, plus information on several Psion-related suppliers and software sources.

Existing subscribers can get a copy of the CD by taking out an advance resubscription for the magazine.

Shareware Shorts

Pete Sipple takes a look at the latest additions to the world of Psion Shareware...



At your fingertips

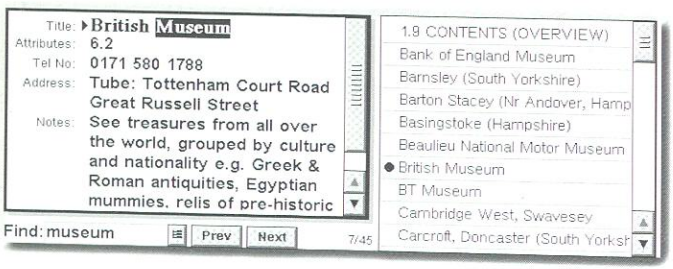
With the *UK Pocket Directory* you need never be stuck for an important number ever again. A joint venture between Stefan Smith and Steve Litchfield, this ever expanding database has information on accommodation, travel, leisure, utilities, administration, Psion contacts and much more. **UKDIR15.ZIP (152K)**

Fax and figures

FaxIt, the alternative to Psion's 3c fax tool, has undergone some major improvements with the introduction of version 2.2. It's now possible to include cover sheets on faxes, create a fax phone book (or use your existing database), plus a host of new dialling options, and, at last, support for the Psion Travel Modem. **FAXIT22.ZIP (44K)**

Got the time?

Time Plan is a task and time management assistant. Use it to plan, prioritise, time and monitor all your tasks.



Lots of useful addresses and more. The UK Pocket Directory

Information bars display outlines of all your current, overdue and completed tasks. Keep track of your valuable time with **TIMEPLAN.ZIP (17K)**

More games...

Fans of Ben Vaughan's games collection may want to check out two new games for the Series 5, *War* and *Robo Dungeon*. These, and other games for the Series 5, Siena and Series 3a/c can be downloaded from Ben's homepage at: *http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/b_vaughan/*

Created by Steve Litchfield for the Series 5, *Atomic* is for those fed up with slow, easy Tetris games. If you're up to the challenge of this high-speed (noisy!) game, try out **ATOMIC13.ZIP (66K)**. Master players stand to win a prize by entering their high score on the on-line leaderboard (*http://3lib.ukonline.co.uk/atomic.htm*).

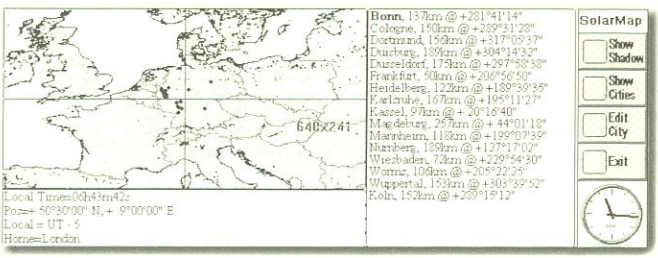
Protect your OPL efforts

SafeOPL is a freeware program for the 3a, 3c and Siena, and protects your OPL code from being reverse-translated by RevTran. It seems to work by patching your program with a completely random code, thus fooling RevTran. Protect your program code from unwanted hacking with **SAFEOPL20.ZIP (4K)**

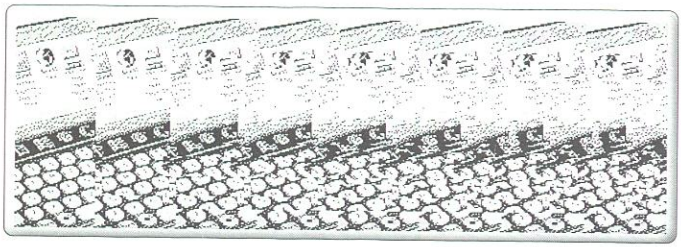
Hotkeys v1.34 runs on an English, German or US Series 5, and gives you the option to cycle forwards and backwards through open applications. HotKeys runs in the background, and controls running applications and documents, lets you jump to the task list and system screen, view text files, check battery state and set power-on options such as start-up view, link settings and backlight controls. **HOTKEYS.ZIP (40K)**

...And world maps

Formally known as GeoClock, *SolarMap* for the Series 5 displays a scrollable, zoomable map of the Earth. With nearly a megabyte of detailed world maps and a database of over a thousand cities you can use the pen interface to browse through the maps, zooming in and out to obtain the view you need. Click on a toolbar button and *SolarMap* will show you a list of nearby cities with their distance and headings from your cursor.



SolarMap. The shareware formerly known as GeoClock



Stereograms on your Series 3. Get squinting!

You can also search the database to find cities in a named country. As with GeoClock you not only get detailed information about the sun and moon's positions at any place and time around the planet, but also watch twilight, night, dawn and day move East to West as is creeps across the maps. Just out of beta test, the latest version of **SOLARMAP.ZIP (636K)** and the Series 3a/3c versions of GeoClock can be downloaded directly from *http://www.compulink.co.uk/~bonzo/Psion/*

Get the picture?

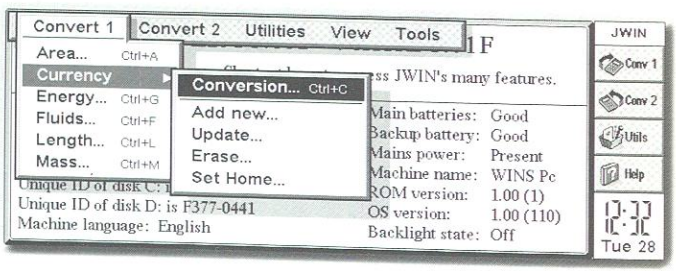
MBMView 1.1 allows you to view all Series 5 bitmap types, including Sketch files. It can create and add to 'multi' bitmap files and views in four or 16 colours. **MBMVIEW.ZIP (16K)**

WinPic v1.1 is a 16-bit Windows program that allows Series 3 and Series 5 bitmap files to be viewed on a Windows PC. It's possible to save pictures as PIC, MBM and BMP formats. Other formats including GIFs can also be viewed. **WNPIC311.ZIP (194K)**

I have trouble seeing anything in these patterns of dots, but many people seem to have the hang of 'magic eye' stereograms. Now you can generate them on your 3a/3c. Happy squinting! **STERVU13.ZIP (13K)**

Utilities

Thesaurus Link v1.04 is a freeware background application which offers the integration previously missing between WORD and the Series 5's Thesaurus function. Your highlighted word is



'Just What I Need'. Useful conversions and utilities for the Series 5

presented to the thesaurus on the press of a user-configurable hotkey. **THESLINK.ZIP (9K)**

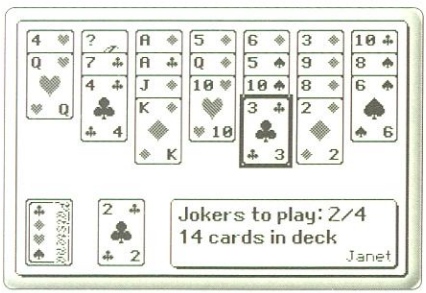
Label Maker prints labels from an address database, with an optional conversion routine to change names like 'John & Sally Smith' to 'Mr. & Mrs. J. Smith'. *Label Maker* has a search capability to allow grouping of addresses for Christmas card lists, etc., and is designed to print any number of labels. The full OPL code is provided to allow modification if required. **LABEL.ZIP (5K)**

entry. The database records whether the trip is personal or for business, the total mileage for each journey, and gives subtotals of each mileage category. Freeware. **M5LOGGER.ZIP (14K)**

New for the 5

JWIN v1.01F for the Series 5 is now available. Phil Spencer's 'Just What I Need' retains the features of the 3a/3c version and works nicely on the 5. **5JWIN101.ZIP (30K)**

M5Logger is a mileage logging program that allows you to record your present location and trip (odometer) reading to a database with a time and date stamped



New for the Siena

If you're looking for a small game to keep on your Siena for those quiet moments, take a look at this little Patience game. **PTSIEN11.ZIP (13K)**

RUS 1.04, the Really Useful Stopwatch, calculates to 1/100th of a second on a 3a/3c or Siena. It's supplied with code which can be called by users' own OPL programs. **RUS.ZIP (8K)**

Many of the programs listed in Shareware Shorts can be found at the Palmtop magazine website, http://www.palmtop.co.uk/

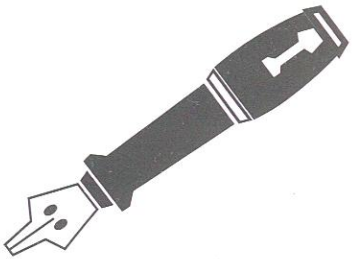
If you can't find a particular piece of software mentioned above, or you've found an excellent program that we've missed, please e-mail us at palmtop@aol.com

Get ALL the shareware featured in this issue on a floppy disk - see page 109

Readers' Letters

Contribute and WIN PRIZES!

The Prize Letter in each issue wins the author a FREE software package or other Psion goodies from our special collection. Prizes are valued at up to £70 each!



A good time?

When I was at school, whenever other boys were fighting (a regular occurrence), I would always be the one to take advantage while they were preoccupied, and quietly walk off with whatever it was they were fighting over. (I once stole someone's girlfriend this way, but that's another story).

Now this is happening all over again. Whilst everyone is sour-graping over 'having to' upgrade now the Series 5 has arrived, am I really the only one to notice what a great time it is to be a Series 3a user? Just look at your local free ads paper, or the 'For Sale' items in *Palmtop* to see those 3a accessories crash in price. I don't feel at all guilty about paying someone £80 for a flash disk which cost them £200 three months ago just because they've felt compelled to buy a Series 5.

I bought a complete 2MB 3a for £150 just as a spare for when my current one is eventually beyond repair. When the spare one breaks I'll use my (then defunct) current one as a source of spares, and when this too ends its life completely I'll go back to my even older 512K machine, now most of my data is on flash anyway. This should ensure I always have a working 3a to hand for the next 15 years or so—long enough for even *me* to master OPL so I can write a couple of extra applications. During this time I'll have a feast of cheap SSDs and software as the platform becomes more obscure and less well supported. I'll never have to translate my AGENDA or DATA files to a new format, I'll not have to read a new manual or learn a new set of hotkeys for a different machine. I won't need to change my

printer cable, my serial cable or my Cyclone disk drive. I can afford to take my 3a EVERYWHERE. Hell, if I break it I've got another in a drawer at home.

Yes, the 3 machines and all the accessories I've bought cost me a fair bit, but now I'm going to sit back and enjoy it. In 15 or 20 years I might need to change, but I'll have saved enough for the 2 Gigabyte Series 9.

Thanks, Psion. Launching the Series 5 is the best thing you've ever done for this dedicated 3a user!

Jonathan Peters
Wokingham, Berkshire

Psion factory horror?

The photo of 'stacked Series 5s' on page 52 of the Psion factory tour in issue 13 shocked me. I work for a company with a large manufacturing facility just outside Zurich. We manufacture many electronic items that use similar technology to the Psion, e.g. PCMCIA modems, and have a large capacity for SMT (surface-mount technology). We are also ISO-9001 compliant.

When I look at the 'stacked Psion' photo through the eyes of a factory worker, I see all sorts of issues:

a) There is no protection between the stacked Psions; they could easily be scratched or marked.

b) The stacks of Series 5s could fall over, damaging them.

c) The work space appears to be very messy and crowded.

All of the above would not be allowed in our factory. We always protect the appearance of products with anti-static foam sheets, transport all products in anti-static bins and have strict anti-static rules throughout, as well as a clean and tidy workspace policy.

In fact, my first thought when I saw the photo was "how on earth can Psion let someone be so sloppy in their factory?"

Jochen Siegenthaler
Zurich, Switzerland

Pushing it to the limits

I've been using a 3a to write my doctoral dissertation consisting of 65 files and almost 3MB of data. This includes a monster database of 13,000 records with 23 fields (yep, that one has to be split into two separate files). I am perfectly aware that a larger computer would be a more suitable platform for a project of this size, but for me handiness is the overriding concern. Inside its belt case my dissertation is always around my waist as well as on my mind.

Reliability is another concern which favours the Psion over machines with spinning hard disks. True, I incurred the penalty of an early technology adopter: four 3a battery cable shorts and a burnt-out screen. But I never lost more than a few hours' work thanks to the solid reliability of keeping backups on flash SSD.

The ultimate in engineering reliability is 100% redundancy. The Psion is inexpensive enough that I can afford two machines—the likelihood that both should be damaged or fail at the same time is reassuringly small.

Paul Lippi
Jerusalem, Israel

Three appeal?

A modest 3a user I am not. Long ago, the overwhelming awe-factor disappeared, replaced by an attitude depicting it as a tool—the garden hoe in my jacket.

For every inch it advanced my life, a centimetre of slippage prevailed for its shortcomings. My problem, of course, is high expectations. The 3a is my sole source of Internet access, the only computer I ever touch. A mighty task for one so small.

Why then, am I both elated and woeful at the launch of the Series 5? The specifications of this beast easily realise my inflated demands. I am worried, though. Not about its capabilities, but its image.

PDAs may well be common in 1997's society, but the hidden power of Psion's machines is known only by their owners and creators—a mere handful of the population. The cult factor of the 3a has definite appeal. Knowing what the combination of owner and machine can achieve while the pencil scrubbers can only scorn.

It's the appeal of the Series 5 to the masses that makes me inclined to doubt its status. While I'm quite sure it will reign supreme as market leader, the leap from calculator case to pygmy-laptop is certain to blow its guise.

Grant Mearns
Acton, London

Psi-author

As a solicitor, my trusty 3c has already become an indispensable part of my working life.

The real test for my 'pocket rocket' came with my decision to embark on a book on the management of Solicitors' practices. I never made a conscious decision to use the Psion: it was to hand when I began my research and I started making notes with it—and the project grew from there. I confess to even using it to capture those moments of inspiration which occur in the bathroom...

I hit on the 'outline' feature by happy accident: I had already used the built-in headings facility and once hit the diamond key by mistake. Lo and behold, a list of my paragraph headings appeared.

I have always found outliners on desktop packages to be terribly cumbersome, but on the Psion it proved a marvellously natural way to work. As well as enabling me to have an overview and quickly alter the structure of the book, using the outliner is the

fastest way to navigate a long document: one press of the diamond key, cursor up or down and you are at your chosen paragraph.

Needless to say, this article was written in my palm. I have also written a large part of my firm's website on the Psion, although I have to admit this is something of a 'walking dog'—it is not how well you can do it but the fact that it is possible which is impressive.

Paul Redpath
Bicester, Oxfordshire

Consumable pens?

I'm a hardened Series 3 user. I moved to a Series 5 in September and I love it to death—BUT, after just two weeks the pointer broke. Annoyed? Irritated? not as much as when I contacted Psion, who informed me that "We're treating the pens as consumable items and we expect users to go through them just like ordinary pens".

I have no problem with consumables—assuming they last longer than two weeks, and assuming they are available. I ordered a pen pack from Psion on 1st October and they said they were 'out of stock'. I called Widget Software and they have the same problem.

If Psion consider the pen to be a consumable, then please, please point this out in the manual and possibly put a spare in the box so that users' expectations are set correctly. When my pointer broke I was devastated as my expectation was that the pointer was a long-term device.

I still love my Series 5, but I just get slightly annoyed when people ask me why I'm using my finger on my brand new organiser.

Mark Robson
Bracknell, Berkshire

The joys of shareware

On the subject of shareware (Stephen Murgan's article in issue 14) I agree with him that shareware is a wonderful thing.

One aspect that makes it so good is that authors will often incorporate users' requests into their development of the project. When I was a CiX user, Matthew Jackson continually incorporated features I asked for, often very quickly, in his e-mail and conference handling programs.

Also, I recently tried out Achay Doan's Polaris program. I tried it out on my 3a, and was disappointed to find that it wouldn't run directly from my Cyclone on drive C. I e-mailed the author, who agreed to modify the program. You certainly wouldn't get that degree of devotion from any commercial software writer. Congratulations and thanks to all shareware authors—long may you continue to write programs!

Neil Sands
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion

A Closer Look...

...at some of the newest and most interesting products available for your Series 3a/3c, Series 5 and Siena

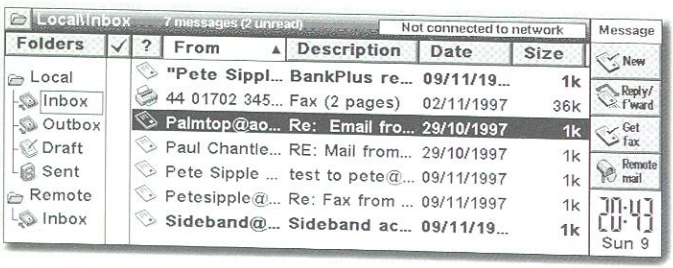
Message Suite

Eagerly awaited for several months, Psion's new *Message Suite* allows you to send and receive both e-mail and faxes with your Series 5, and the built-in web browser offers full WWW access. The web browser is actually an integral part of the Message Suite package, but as it really performs a different function to the e-mail part of the program we've decided to review it separately, with its own star rating as though it were a completely independent package. The review of the web software follows on directly from this article.

Psion Message will allow you to do the following:

- Send and receive e-mail.
- Send and receive fax messages.
- Forward fax or e-mail messages to other addresses.
- Request 'faxback' faxes.

Anyone with experience of using PsiMail Internet on the Series 3a/3c will be pleased to see some welcome changes, notably the more friendly interface with its on-screen folders for the



inbox and outbox. Psion have addressed my biggest PsiMail gripe by improving the feedback presented to the user during a connection. The whole time you're working, a status bar in the top right hand corner of the display shows the exact state of your connection and what's going on behind the scenes. The dialog boxes are clear and easy to understand, and initial setup is very straightforward.

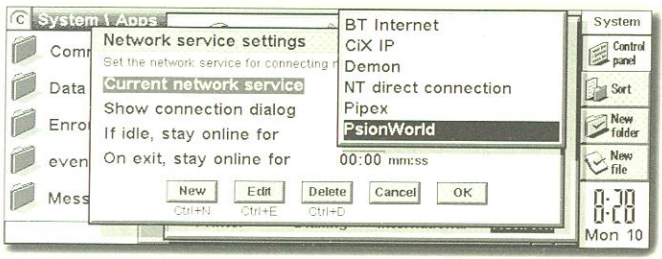
Setting up

Once installed, three new icons appear in the system screen's control panel—a logical location. These options control dialling (setting the location you are calling from, any special codes required to obtain an outside line from your location, telephone chargecard details, etc.), modem type (with pre-configured settings for the Psion Travel Modem, Psion Dacom, Hayes compatible and US Robotics Sportster as standard) as well as a 'Network' option for your service provider details.

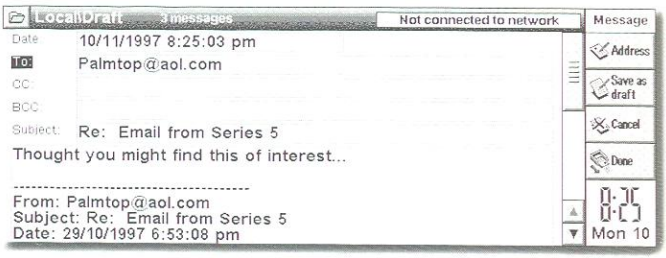
The software should work with any ISP (Internet Service Provider), and comes with pre-configured setups for BT Internet, CiX IP, Demon, Pipex and PsionWorld. For U.S. users it adds AT&T, Netcom and Prodigy. Use with other ISPs simply requires a minute or so to set the various options before your first connection. Connection via CompuServe is possible (for WWW access), but *without* access to your e-mail mailbox. AOL users should note that AOL does *not* fall into the category of normal ISPs, and is not supported.

E-mail

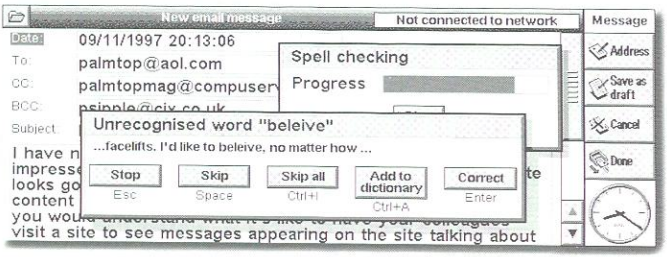
Composing an e-mail is very straightforward, and once composed you can



Select your ISP—it's easy to add your own settings if your particular provider isn't in the list



Composing an e-mail offline, before making the connection



Spellchecking an e-mail. A useful facility for most of us

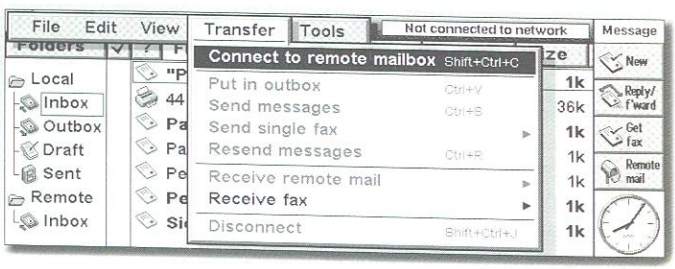
either save it in a draft folder for further editing before transmittal or place it in your outbasket so it will be ready to send the next time you're online. Cut, copy, paste, replace and spell checking options are all available, and you can of course import chunks of text from any other application on the Series 5.

When connecting to your mail server you can see a summary of what's in your online mailbox *before* downloading it to your Series 5—great if you wish to save on charges by vetting messages first.

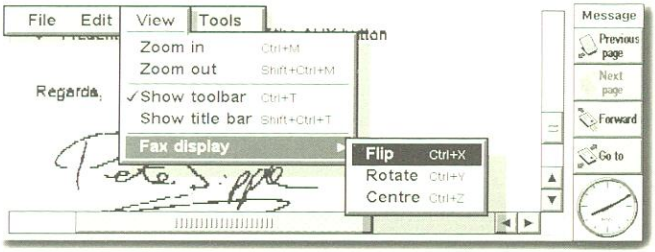
Faxing

Psion have taken the step of tying e-mail and fax into the same package, which seems an excellent synergy, and is likely to steer users away from EasyFax.

Functionality is mostly identical to EasyFax (see issue 14 for a full review). You can preview a fax, zoom to three levels, receive faxback, and, a rather nice touch, rotate faxes to read them sideways.

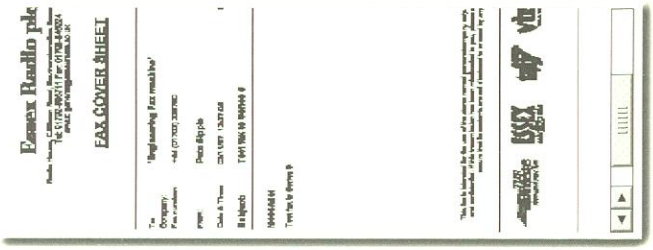


Preparing to connect to your e-mail service provider...



Fax options. Flip, rotate or zoom a fax image to improve readability

Viewing a previously received fax, sideways on



Summary

This is an excellent package—especially as it's free. As with PsiMail Internet, it is a memory-hungry program: sending an e-mail required around 550K of RAM. Psion Message is also slow to load, taking more than 15 seconds to fire up, and the additions to the control panel slow that down too. The previously almost instantaneous appearance of the Control Panel now takes some seven seconds with the Message Suite installed.

The address book is well implemented, the interface is very user-friendly, and it's packed with features.

The only major limitation is that the Message Suite will not support file attachments such as MIME or UUEncode. It is therefore not possible to send or receive Psion files as attachments, only as raw text within the body of the e-mail.

Pete Sipple

Message Suite

From: Psion's own web site (check for current version).

Availability: now

Contact: http://www.psion.com/

Runs on: Series 5

Supplied on: www only

Price: FREE

Rating:

Psion Web

Back in issue 10, I confessed how surprised I was with PsiMail Internet's implementation of a web browser on a Series 3c. Once again, I have to admit just how impressed I am to see a slick and relatively powerful browser on such a small computer. Here's what you can do with it:

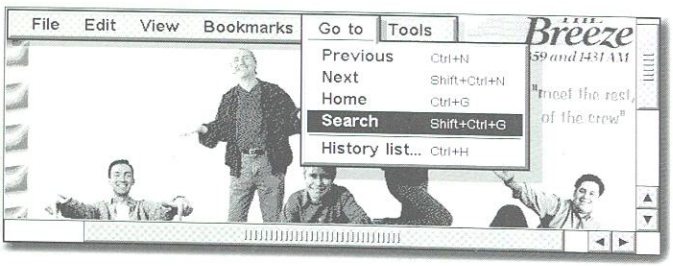
- Connect to and navigate around the Internet.
- Save and view World Wide Web pages and images offline.
- Download files to your Series 5.

Considerably faster and more stable than its 3c predecessor, Psion Web now has support for tables, JPEG images, interlaced GIFs, and most surprisingly, *animated* GIFs. My own homepage contains a small, animated logo, and I nearly fell over backwards when I logged on and first saw it moving.

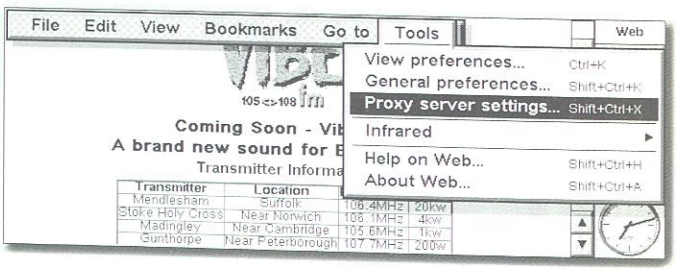
Web setup is just like the e-mail part of the package, making use of the same system control panel options.

When using this software it's clear that full attention has been given to making sure that every square millimetre of the screen can be used for viewing a downloaded page. You can remove the scroll bars, status bar, toolbar and address, change the base font size and select from one of four zoom levels to really get the maximum on screen.

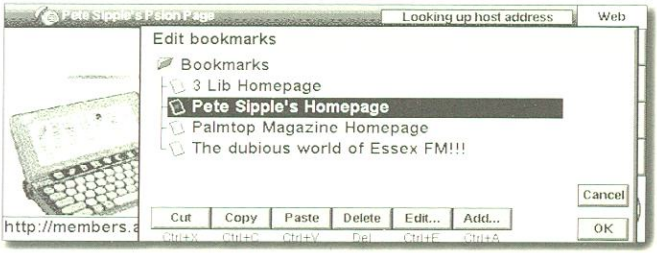
Support for Arial, Times Roman and Courier fonts is built-in, and apart from some Java-enabled sites, I managed to successfully connect to almost every site I tried.



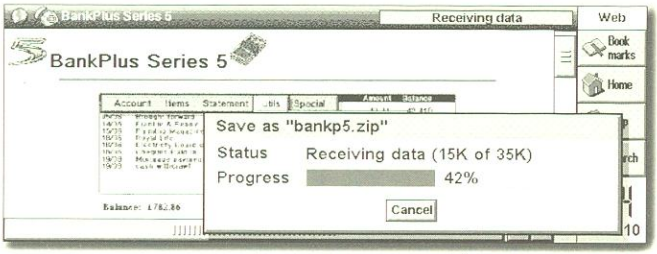
Navigating the Net on a Series 5—graphics and all!


File Edit View Bookmarks Go to Tools Web
View preferences... Ctrl+K
General preferences... Shift+Ctrl+K
Proxy server settings... Shift+Ctrl+X
Infrared
Help on Web... Shift+Ctrl+H
About Web... Shift+Ctrl+A
Coming Soon - Vib
A brand new sound for E
Transmitter Informa
Transmitter Location
Mendlesham Suffolk 106.4MHz 20kw
Stoke Holy Cross Near Norwich 106.1MHz 4kw
Madingley Near Cambridge 105.6MHz 1kw
Gunthorpe Near Peterborough 107.7MHz 200w

Configuring server settings



Viewing bookmarks for your favourite pages



Downloading a file from the World Wide Web

It's easily to create bookmarks to your favourite sites and to view a history list showing where you've been. If you find a file that isn't an image then you are prompted to download it, which, in conjunction with a third-party unzipper package, will be good news for shareware fans.

When I first looked at this software it was in beta, and the only problem I could find was an occasional 'unknown file type' when accessing an '.HTM' extension after hopping back through cached pages. I have been unable to reproduce this in the release version, so hopefully Psion were able to nail the problem. As with the e-mail software it's quite memory hungry, requiring around 650K of RAM when connected and downloading.

In summary, Psion have done an excellent job of bringing the Web to the Series 5—this browser has been worth waiting for.

Pete Sipple

Psion Web

From: Psion's own web site (check for current version).

Availability: now

Contact: http://www.psion.com/

Runs on: Series 5

Supplied on: www only

Price: FREE

Rating:

Allegro

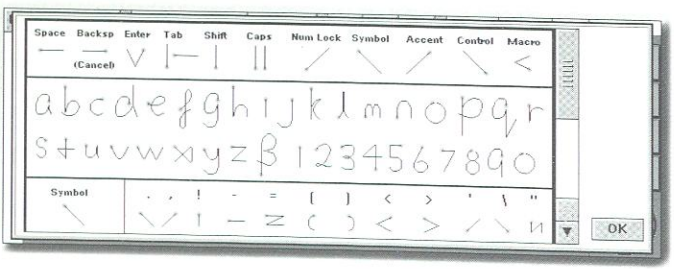
With the capability to draw shapes directly onto the Series 5 screen, some users have asked "Why not have some form of handwriting recognition, so we can scribble text directly onto the screen?" Purple Software have now produced such a beast—Allegro.

Allegro doesn't allow you to write whole sentences across the screen as you would if you were writing on a paper notebook (or an Apple Newton), but instead uses the *US Robotics PalmPilot* approach of 'writing' single characters, one at a time, into a small box. These 'gestures' you enter to represent each letter and number are not *always* identical to the real thing, but unlike the PalmPilot, with Allegro *most* of them are.

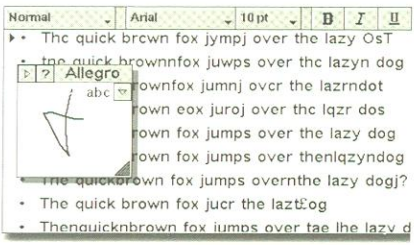
All of the 'gestures' require that you enter the strokes in a certain way, always starting at the point marked by the black dot (see screen shot below). Don't be daunted by this prospect though, as in practice it doesn't take more than five minutes to learn A-Z and 0-9. Some of the symbols and accented characters take a little longer, but most of the patterns are logical and easy to learn.

As with all Purple's programs these days, Allegro offers masses of configuration options and the program's basic design can barely be faulted. The entry box can be re-sized and dragged anywhere around the screen, set for entry of text, capitals, numbers, symbols or accented characters, and it even has a limited macro feature that assigns short text blocks to the letters A-Z. In this way you can use a gesture to put Allegro into macro mode, then 'write' the letter 'T', and Allegro will type "Thank you for your recent correspondence" or any other phrase you have previously set up. You can store up to 26 macros, one for each letter of the alphabet, and assign macros to enter the current date and time or mimic any combination of special keystrokes.

Another interesting feature is the 'Clipbook'. This allows you to take any text or graphic from the clipboard and save it for subsequent re-use in Allegro macros. This works well, and you can use it to save numerous graphics, signatures and entire blocks for easy insertion into documents.



Allegro's main help screen, showing how admirably similar its characters are to the *real* alphabet



The program's versatility also allows the user to pick which applications the Allegro window will appear in, and the size and position of the window in each case. You can also set the window to appear rotated 90 degrees to the left or right, which tends to make things easier by letting you hold your Series 5 sideways (like a book), making the keyboard less of an obstruction.

Ignoring all the wizardry, the important question is whether 'writing' on your Series 5 screen is actually comparable to typing on it. After several hours persevering with Allegro the answer for me has to be no. Even a raw novice can usually type around 20 words per minute, and most people can manage at least 30 w.p.m. with a little practice. Even after several hours with Allegro I couldn't do much more than 10 words per minute accurately.

Using Allegro to enter numbers into spreadsheet cells was a little more successful, as inputting lots of numeric data without the aid of a dedicated keypad is somewhat slow anyway. This was still no match for keyboard entry though, and was the final straw that left me wondering why anyone would try to add character recognition to a machine with such an excellent keyboard.

Purple Software argue that many people have poor keyboard skills, and that Allegro may be preferable for text entry while on the move. It's true that Allegro allows you to enter data without looking at the machine (perhaps to take notes during a conversation), but I struggled in vain to find *any* areas where it was truly more expedient to use Allegro rather than the keyboard.

For use on a future keyboard-less EPOC32 machine Allegro compares favourably with *Graffiti* running on the extremely successful USR PalmPilot, and for such a machine too small to incorporate a keyboard this kind of input method will get the job done.

Those with poor keyboard skills may like to at least give Allegro a try, but for those with any mastery of the Series 5's excellent keyboard this product is probably of little value.

Steve Clack

Allegro

From: All major Psion dealers

Availability: now

Contact: 0171 3877777 (Purple)

Runs on: Series 5

Supplied on: floppy disk

Price: £49.95 including VAT.

Rating:

SIUFax

Until now, Series 3a/3c owners have only been able to *send* faxes from their palmtops, not receive them. This new product from Germany changes all that.

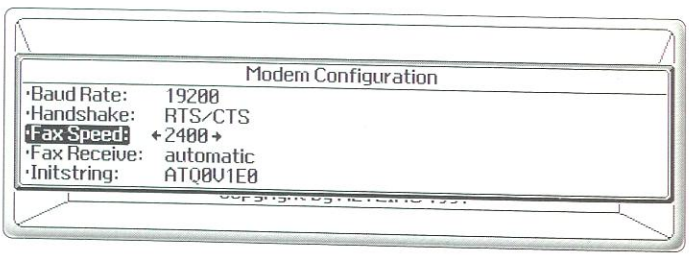
First off, it has to be said that SIUFax is not the most visually appealing program in the world, but 3a/3c users who've been anxiously waiting for a way to receive faxes while on the move will be grateful nonetheless.

For the purposes of the review, fax receipt was tested with a Psion Travel Modem and a US Robotics Sportster 14400 fax modem—both with good results. I was a little surprised when I received the review software: it comprises just a single 26K file, which needs to be copied into the \APP\ directory. Once this is done and the icon installed (<Psion><I>), you're ready to go. Using Psion's Travel Modem means there's nothing further to do, as all the communication settings are taken care of for you. Users of other modems will find a single configuration screen from which the communication settings must be set up (see screen shot below).

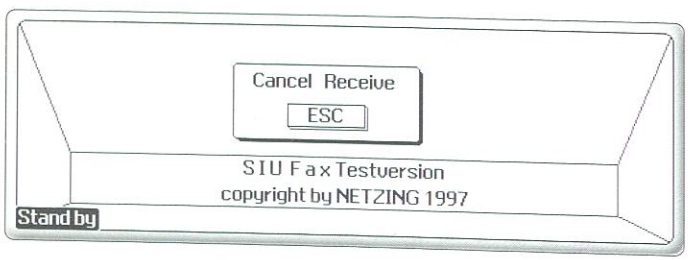
To receive a fax the modem is first plugged in, and 'Start Fax Receive' is selected from the menu.

Scrolling around received faxes is a little primitive, but perfectly usable. There are three levels of zoom available, and each page is saved as a separate file. The average size of a received page is only around 18K, which is good news for those who are short of memory space.

In summary, if you're prepared to live with the basic interface, this small and functional program may be just what mobile users have been waiting for. Of course, SIUFax only handles *incoming*



SIU fax setup



Waiting for a fax. A plain and unattractive interface, but it works

Viewing a fax on screen

adio House, Clifftown Road, Southend on Sea Essex SS1 1SX
Tel. 01702-333711 Fax. 01702-345224
email: pete@assamradio.co.uk
Direct lines: Tel: 01702-323213 Fax: 01702-323275
FAX COVER SHEET
'Engineering Fax machine'
+44 (01702) 335760
1

Zoomed in to view a fax in more detail

faxes, so you'll still need either *PsiFax* or *FaxIt* loaded on your machine in order to send faxes too, and it would be good to see a future version of SIUfax with this capability incorporated.

Pete Sipple

SIUfax

From: Exportech

Availability: now

Contact: 0181 6823313 (see page 106 for details)

Runs on: Series 3a/3c

Supplied on: floppy disk

Price: £34.08 including VAT. (see page 106 for special offer)

Rating:

FAXING?

If you want to send faxes from a Series 3a or 3c then you need one of the following:

PsiFax: Fax transmission software from Psion. Available from all major Psion dealers at £49.95 inc. VAT, and reviewed in issue 11 of *Palmtop*.

FaxIt: A shareware fax transmission program, available at £14. See Shareware Shorts on page 10 and the Software Directory at the back of this issue for more details.

MacConnect

At first sight, MacConnect sounds like the answer to Series 5 Macintosh users' prayers. Before this product the only way to backup or transfer Series 5 files was either by using PsiWin under *VirtualPC* or *Softwindows 95* (or buying dedicated PC hardware for your Mac), or to transfer things file-by-file using a terminal emulator program, as outlined by Rick Andrews in 'The Universal Connection' article in our last issue.

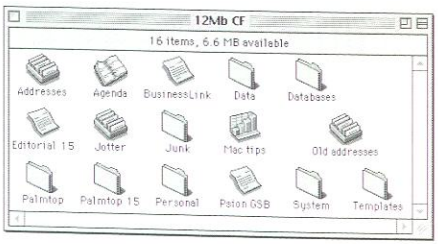
On further examination, MacConnect is not what it may seem. It is not simply a Macintosh equivalent of PsiWin, nor even a Series 5 compatible version of the Series 3a/3c PsiMac, as reviewed in the last issue. This program offers no file conversion capabilities *whatsoever*.

So what does it do? It provides an excellent backup and restore mechanism identical to PsiMac, and a utility to automatically install new software from the '.CTL' or '.SIS' files supplied with almost every piece of Series 5 software. And that's it.

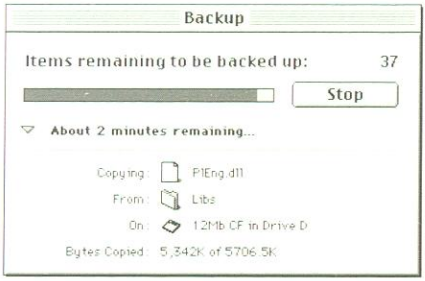
What happened to the file conversion part of MacConnect? Who knows. We can only guess that time and resources were tight at Psion, and that this lacklustre effort was deemed to be at least better than nothing. Fabulous—Mac users wait the best part of six months to pay £40 for a half-baked substitute for a program that PC users get bundled with their Series 5s free of charge. I'm sure we should really be grateful that a palmtop computer vendor deigns to give us minority computer users any support at all (after all, Microsoft certainly don't), but somehow I find it hard to muster much gratitude.

Trying to be positive, installation is easy, the interface is excellent and everything works like a dream—as far as it goes. If you read our review of PsiMac for the '3' then almost everything from that review applies: installation leaves a little Psion icon next to your Finder menu, and you just pull down the Psion menu to access backup and restore functions, or to install new software. The Series 5 and any installed CompactFlash disk will appear as click-able icons on your Macintosh desktop.

Strangely, MacConnect also displays an option to 'Compress' Flash SSDs to removed unused space, even though this option is completely redundant for Series 5 CF disks, which dynamically reclaim unused space without user intervention. Selecting the 'Compress' option springs up a dialog box



A Psion on your Mac, *sans* conversion



Excellent backup capabilities

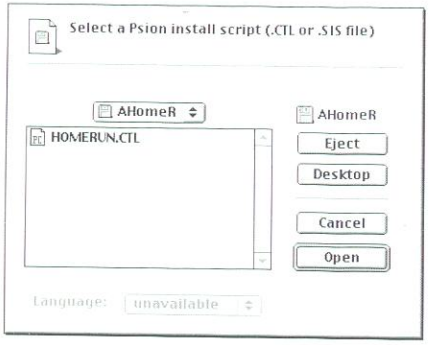
explaining that compression is not necessary with a Series 5—bizarre. The answer to this oddity is most certainly that MacConnect and PsiMac share identical interfaces, and thus a lot of the same program code, but it's a small annoyance nevertheless.

The backup process is admirably configurable: the user can elect to store up to nine previous backups and to have the Mac remind you when you haven't done so for a period of days. Connection and data transfer are at 115,200bps (unless you have a very old Mac that doesn't support this speed), and the whole process works without a hitch. Files are all placed into their normal directory structure rather than as a single archive, so it's easy to pull out individual files or move them around.

Without any file conversion capability all this flexibility is of very little account. Double-clicking one of those nice spreadsheet icons within a Psion folder on your Mac desktop will elicit a stern warning that 'the document cannot be opened because the application program that created it cannot be found'. It's important to note that the Series 5 has almost no built-in file conversions of its own, just the ability to save WORD files as plain text (i.e. with *no* formatting) and to import/export DATA files as comma or tab delimited. This means that you can transfer basic (unformatted) notes to your Mac and send database files in both directions (with a little work), but AGENDA and spreadsheet files just can't be opened on your Mac.

The only other option is to print 'To File' with the 'General' print driver, and then to sort out the raw text from there (this procedure is explained in the 'Move it, Move it' article in issues 10 and 11). This is so agonisingly impractical that it's often quicker to re-type the required document straight into your desktop computer, or if you have a scanner and OCR software, to use the ludicrously convoluted route of printing out the document directly from your Series 5, then scanning it and using the OCR to read the text into your Macintosh application. So much for 'desktop integration'.

Installing software onto your Series 5 has always been a manual process with a Macintosh, as there was previously no software to perform the automatic file placement offered by PsiSetup on a PC. That's all changed now, and your Series 5 can use the same '.CTL' or '.SIS' files as a PC, and of course the process works equally well if the software is supplied on a PC-formatted disk rather than a Macintosh one.



Easy software installation

So, MacConnect is a delightfully efficient way to backup, restore and install programs onto your Series 5 (or Geofox One), but as a true connectivity option is a rather sad joke. Serious Macintosh users are still better off with a Series 3a/3c, or with a copy of PsiWin running under either software or hardware PC emulation.

Steve Clack

MacConnect

From: All major Psion dealers

Availability: December 1997

Contact: n/a

Runs on: Apple Macintosh

Supplied on: floppy disk

Price: £39.95 including VAT.

Rating:

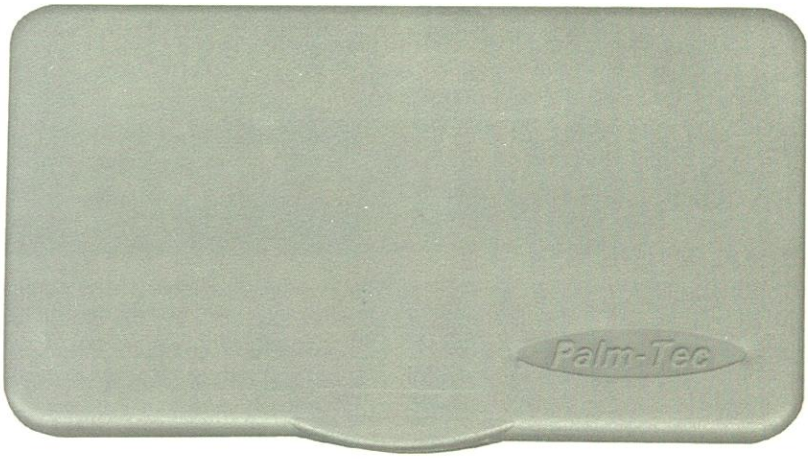
Palm-Tec case

There's a pretty comprehensive and varied array of cases available for Psion computer owners. Everything ranging from slim and minimalist 'slip' cases through to luxurious thick leather or Cordura pouches, belt mounted holders and shoulder holsters.

Although the broad range of cases available should cater for 97 percent of users, there's still nothing *totally* durable: nothing that will withstand being dropped onto a hard surface, or being accidentally stood on (though some of the thickest leather cases come quite close). Also, few conventional cases offer much resistance to the ingression of dust and tiny objects, as you might find when a Psion is left rattling around in a briefcase containing bits of left-over sandwich, old staples, paper clips, bits of fluff and so on.

The Palm-Tec case tries to address this gap in the market with a sturdy ABS plastic 'box' with a layer of foam padding inside. The basic idea is sound, in that a palmtop computer housed in such a box is largely immune from very hard knocks, dust and dirt, and is even likely to survive a modest liquid spill. In reality, the poor execution of this logical concept makes the Palm-Tec case less suitable for the task than it ought to be.

First off, the padding around the inside edges of the case is quite generous at about 10mm, but inside the top and bottom it is only a millimetre or so thick.



This is hardly enough to absorb the shock of a hard drop, and partly negates the sturdiness of the outer case.

Secondly, the catch mechanism doesn't work terribly well. The metal-pinned hinge along the back is admirably strong, but the opposite edge is designed to be prized apart by simultaneously depressing the top left and bottom right edges of the casing's front. This action squeezes in a couple of plastic lugs on the inside of the box, and releases them from a pair of small indents on the opposite sides. The trouble is that anyone looking at the box would automatically assume that the thing should be opened by pressing on the area of the small rounded features in the *centre* of the box front. These, strangely, form no useful function at all.

In fairness these weird catches aren't so bad once you get used to the mechanism, except that they also suffer from being too flimsy. I experimented by dropping the case onto a (carpeted) floor, where it invariably sprung open, and the Series 3 inside hopped disconcertingly onto the floor.

The combination of these shortcomings make the Palm-Tec case largely unsuitable for the very application it was intended, which for something as simple as a plastic box is inexcusable. At almost £25 a throw (oops!), this is hardly good value for money.

Steve Clack

Palm-Tec case

From: Palm-Tec Ltd

Availability: now

Contact: tel/fax: 01342 317416
E-mail: palmtec@aol.com

Price: £24.95 inc. VAT/postage

Rating:

Monopoly

Monopoly on the Series 5 plays very much like the real board game. The disadvantage is that the screen shrinks all the detail down to a much smaller size. At times it does seem rather overcrowded in its efforts to give you as much visual information as possible within the Series 5's relatively small screen size.

There are three viewing options available throughout the game. Most useful is the main screen with four elements: a main board overview, a close-up of the playing piece being moved, player wealth information, plus the usual Series 5 toolbar down the right side.

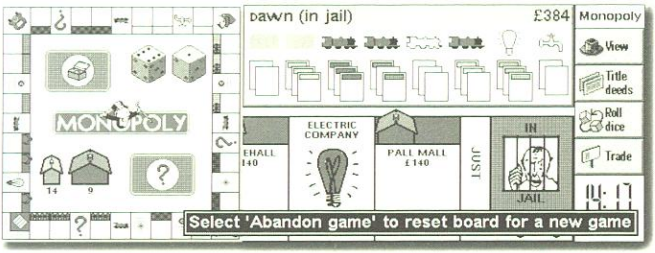
There is an impressive array of menu options available in Monopoly, allowing players to fine tune the game to their own personal preferences. The 'Preferences' section has four categories, allowing such amendments as the speed and duration of the game and whether the monetary wealth of players is displayed for all to see. Playing with this option disabled does make bidding at auction or considering offers much more of a gamble, but the choice is yours.

'Game rules' has three categories. For Monopoly purists the game can be set up to abide by all the official rules. Having lost the booklet to my own set long ago, my initial apprehension was that I wouldn't be able to play by my own 'house' rules. Series 5 Monopoly thankfully allowed me to set up a game exactly to my liking: setting it so that anyone landing on 'free parking' collects all fines currently in the kitty.

'Player settings' allows you to configure up to six players with any combination of humans and computer players. The really clever bit is that using no less than four groups of settings allowed me to tailor the computer players' characteristics like degree of caution, determination, enterprise and forgetfulness, or how highly they rate the ownership of each group of properties. Initially you will need to make some reference to the comprehensive help screens in order to understand some of the options. Cheating, alas, is restricted to computer players. It allows them (for instance) to take a peek at the next chance card. I tried this as a human player and was given a suitable ticking off!

'Sound settings' has a whole host of options, including a wonderful wailing siren as you are carted off to jail. Most useful is having an appropriate sound for each player's token, used to help highlight whose turn it is.

It was worth spending time on all the various settings to fine tune the game



It's all happening—Dawn's in jail and the bargaining continues...

before I commenced play. Information while playing is available through the menus, the toolbar, or by tapping at various points on the game board. I generally found tapping to be the quickest and easiest route, and by touching on a property it's easy to 'View title deeds', find out who owns a property, its mortgage value, statistics of how valuable it has been in the game so far, and finally to make a bid for it.

Trading does not rest there. I can reject and counter offers made to me and propose property/cash deals to other players using the 'trade' menu during the game. I did get stuck in a loop when trying to counter an offer made by the computer player, but maybe he was just being stubborn in persisting with his unchanged offer. I recommend viewing the value of any deal before proceeding with it, as I initially got caught out accepting properties that I hadn't realised were already mortgaged.

The two other main screens help you to keep track of players' wealth and who owns what in order to help you plan your strategy during the game. In setting up the game preferences I opted not to hide players' cash—I then used this information to help me at auctions, backing down when someone had plenty of cash with which to outbid me.

'Save game' allows you to stop at any point and resume later, though of course with a Psion you can usually just leave the program open in the background as you go about your other work.

I enjoyed my time playing this game, and credit is due to the authors for making it so comprehensive in detail without losing any of the fun factor. This is a meticulously detailed implementation of the classic board game and an ideal Christmas gift for Monopoly fans.

Dawn Hamilton

Monopoly

From: All major Psion dealers

Availability: December 1997

Contact: n/a

Runs on: Series 5

Supplied on: floppy disk

Price: £29.95 including VAT.

Rating:

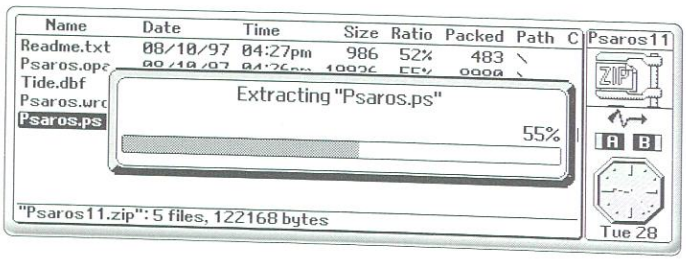
Cyclone floppy disk drive

Purple Software's Series 3a floppy disk drive first appeared in detail in *Palmtop* Issue 8, with a full 7 pages devoted to dissecting it in detail. It was (and still is) unique in allowing direct and seamless access to standard PC-format floppy diskettes from a Psion palmtop, but the reviewers at the time made reference to a number of worries and concerns.

It's now a year or so on and Purple haven't been idle. Firstly, they designed and released a version of the Cyclone that would work with the Series 3c and Siena, with the special 'Honda' connector rather than the Series 3a's square connector. And now, tired of supporting two different versions of basically the same unit, they have launched an all-purpose unit with connectors and leads for the 3a, 3c and Siena. The physical arrangement of leads isn't the end of the story, however, and there have been other minor (but welcome) changes as well.

The new Cyclone looks virtually identical to the old version, a 240mm long die-cast black metal box, but the rear panel has changed. There's now a removable 9-pin serial connector in place of the old hard-wired lead sticking out of the back, plus leads to go to either type of Psion palmtop, and an on/off switch to help save battery life when connected to the now optional *external* battery pack.

In fact, the battery/mains power consideration represents perhaps the most significant change to the Cyclone's reason for existence. When originally launched, I think the idea was that many people would use it on the move, perhaps keeping it in a briefcase as a companion to the Psion. There was an internal battery compartment and the mains adaptor was very much an optional afterthought. The problem, of course, was that the batteries really didn't last very long, making the Cyclone expensive and inconvenient to run. Most users quickly tracked down and purchased a mains adaptor and never looked back. The idea of a mobile diskette drive also tended to be discarded in favour of viewing the Cyclone as a 'much cheaper than a PC' Psion companion, based at home or at work on the desktop and plugged into the mains.



PsiZip running with the Cyclone floppy disk drive

CYCLONE

As the maintainer of the *3-Lib* shareware library I can vouch for the happiness of over a hundred Psion owners who depend on their Cyclones for backup and installation of software. With the relaunch of this 'multi-version' Cyclone, Purple have acknowledged this change in the way the disk drive is used and have dropped the battery compartment altogether, supplying a mains adaptor in the box instead. It's now the battery pack which is the optional extra, and I think the product hangs together much better in this form. Negative comments about the unit's size can also now be largely discounted in this new desk-top rôle, and when used in this way the metal frame is reassuringly sturdy.

Installing the special device driver from the supplied floppy disk went smoothly, and inside two minutes I had the *File Manager* software installed on my Psion and ready for action. There's not much to write about here—the software just works as it's intended to. Personally, I've always been a fan of Purple's File Manager, preferring it to the built-in Psion 3c application, and so felt instantly at home. The new drive 'C' showed up in most Psion applications, with the only problems coming in applications written before the advent of the Cyclone, and which didn't know of the possible existence of the extra drive letter.

As proof that it all worked, the screen shot opposite shows my Psion running the shareware PsiZip program and extracting a file from an archive. Both the PsiZip program and the archive were only resident on the floppy disk itself.

Most of the software caveats mentioned in the original review still apply, and the floppy disk unit can still be very slow when large numbers of small files are being manipulated. In this situation it would be far better to use a compression utility such as *PsiZip* or even Purple Software's own *DataSafe* utility, from their *Toolkit 2* (reviewed in issue 10) to store groups of files as single archives.

Unplugging the Cyclone and swapping between a PsiWin link or a Travel Modem instead all went smoothly for me, without a single hitch. It seems that this product really is mature enough now to handle 'real-world' complications.

Responding to criticism, Purple have enlarged the Cyclone installation guide to 8 pages, including a troubleshooting guide. Although still not the longest manual in the world it's a great improvement on the old one, providing evidence that they've been listening to their customers. The 26 page File Manager manual hasn't changed at all, although it's largely redundant as the software is very intuitive to use.

Despite some improvements it's a real pity that there is still no truly portable solution available for those in need of a floppy disk drive for their Series 3a/3c/Siena. The Cyclone remains a large and clumsy 'brick' to carry around, and it's surprising that current technology hasn't enabled Purple to come up with something substantially smaller and lighter.

The only other down-side to the new Cyclone is that in the wake of the hardware improvements the price has crept up a little. Although the best part of £190 is very expensive for a floppy disk drive, it's still an awful lot cheaper than a desk-top PC. Psion users without a full-sized computer should look no further than the Cyclone.

Steve Litchfield

Universal Cyclone

From: All major Psion dealers

Availability: now

Contact: Purple Software Ltd
Tel: 0171 3877777

Runs on: Series 3a/3c/Siena

Supplied on: n/a

Price: £189.95 including VAT

Rating:

Berlitz Phrase Book

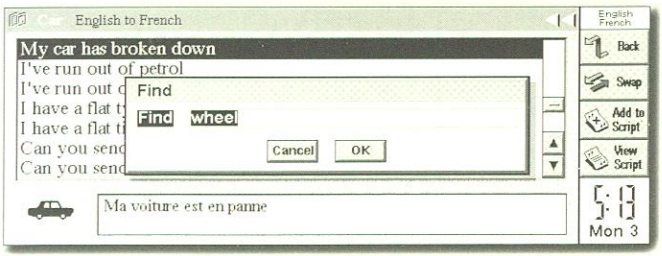
Although I was born British, my love of travelling would lead you to believe that my first citizenship is of the world. This is where I fit right in with Berlitz Phrase Book, as any of its 13 languages can be set as the mother tongue, with translations happening to and from the other 12. No bias, no prejudice, no hassle and very impressive.

The aim of the Phrase Book is to accompany you or I, the traveller, through a number of common situations and emergencies in foreign lands, and the format mimics the small Berlitz paperback book versions. For example, and completely off the top of my head, say I need to see a doctor in Berlin. Tapping on 'Emergencies' and then 'General' pops up a number of alternatives, including "Can you get me a doctor?", which is translated as *"Können Sie einen Arzt holen?"*.

So far so good. Again, completely at random, I'm in Lyons (France) and somebody's stolen the front wheels off my van—this actually happened to me once, by the way! Tapping on 'Travelling' and then 'Car' reveals *"My car has broken down"*, or *"Ma voiture est en panne"*, which is as close as the database could get. There's a handy *Find* facility, though typing in 'wheel' elicits the only match in the program, which is *"Please check the spare wheel"*.

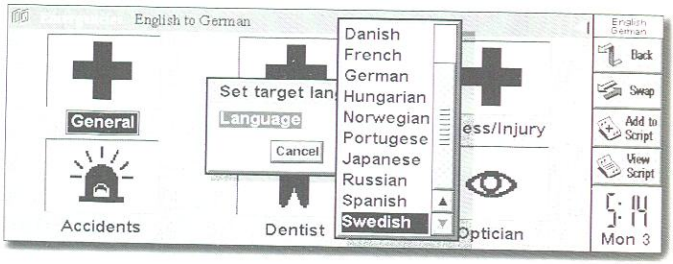
I need to order some non-alcoholic beer (still in Lyons, by the way, as I'm still missing two wheels) *"A beer please"* was all I could find in the Phrase Book, with no reference to alcohol in any of the sections. Ah well, it's a good thing that asking for different types of beer is something I already know in about six languages.

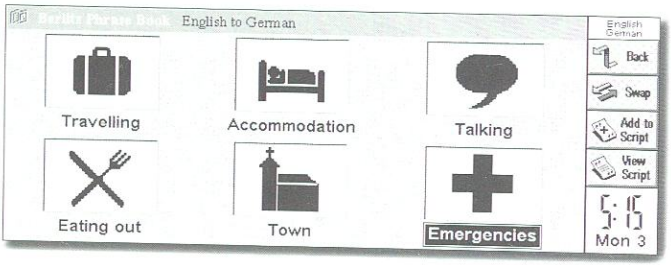
It quickly becomes obvious that, well designed and clever as the program is, it's no match for even a cursory learning of the language itself. In fact, I reckon you could get yourself up to the standard of a typical phrasebook in less than 10 hours of study. And this will have the extra benefits that you'll be able to communicate without having to stare at a dimly lit Psion screen, and also that you'll have a fighting chance of understanding any answers that come flying back.



Although Berlitz Phrasebook is on the face of it written by Psion themselves, the 'About' screen reveals that it is in fact done by

Translate between the 10 languages shown in the list to the right, plus English, Italian and Dutch





Just click on the phrase category of interest...

Palmtop BV in the Netherlands, which explains both the extreme flexibility in the language department and the high-quality programming. It's well organised and professionally done, and the only flaw I could find was that category selection works oddly. If the highlight is already on a category (see screen shot above), I'd expect that tapping another would just move the highlight. In fact it *enters* the latter category, which takes some getting used to, and more than once left me one 'level' too far down in the interface.

It's a minor point, though, as this is a good application and there's even a rather clever script facility which lets you add phrases as you go, ready for rattling off in one breath in front of a suitable foreigner. If you haven't got time to make a stab at learning the lingo of the natives this is a good emergency aid and fun to use, but most people will be better off taking an hour or two to go back to school and drum the basics into memory instead.

Daniel Madden

Berlitz Phrase Book

From: All major Psion dealers

Availability: December 1997

Contact: n/a

Runs on: Series 5

Supplied on: 3.5" floppy disk

Price: £39.95 including VAT

Rating:

5Pack

Purple Software seem to be generating an endless stream of Series 5 games at the moment: first Chess (reviewed in issue 13), then Backgammon and Chinese Chess (issue 14), and now the *5Pack*, a collection of five more.

Homerun

This is virtually a duplicate of the popular Patience card game that was built into the 1MB and 2MB Series 3a/3c. This is no surprise, as Chris Hennings, one of the directors of Purple Software, was the author of the original shareware Homerun before it made it to the Series 3a/3c ROM.

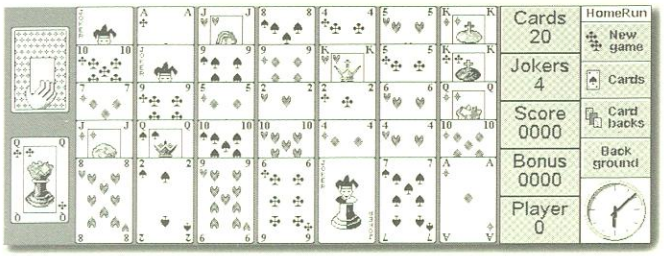
Homerun is essentially a single player patience (solitaire) game, but with an added scoring mechanism that makes it playable by two people in competition. The object of the game is basically to build onto a single base card in ascending or descending sequence, regardless of suit.

The game plays just like the Series 3c version, except that it's now possible to drag or tap to move the cards around the screen, of which tapping is much faster. The additional sound effects, selectable background patterns and card backs of the Series 5 version don't really add anything to the playability once you get into it, and it has to be said that this version is no more enjoyable than the original 3c version, apart from the faster gameplay due to the tap-able screen. Overall this is a well executed porting of a tried and tested favourite, but if you got bored of playing it on the 3c then this version offers nothing new.

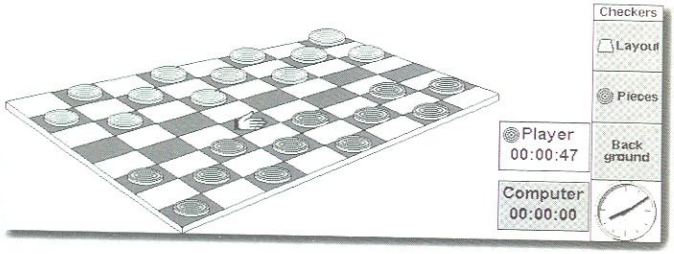
Checkers

This will be more familiar to those in the UK as Draughts. In common with the other board game in this compendium, and as with all Purple's Series 5 board games to date, Checkers offers a wonderfully configurable board layout with two dimensional and three dimensional views, different 3-D perspectives, together with more gameplay options than you can shake a stick at.

There's little to say about this game apart from the extensive feature list: adjustable animation, play against the



Homerun. Another Series 3 favourite running on the Series 5



Draughts for the Series 5—a.k.a. 'Checkers'

computer, play against another human opponent, let the computer play itself, difficulty level from beginner to expert, undo last move, get hints, auto-replay your last game—you name it. If you like Draughts then you'll like this.

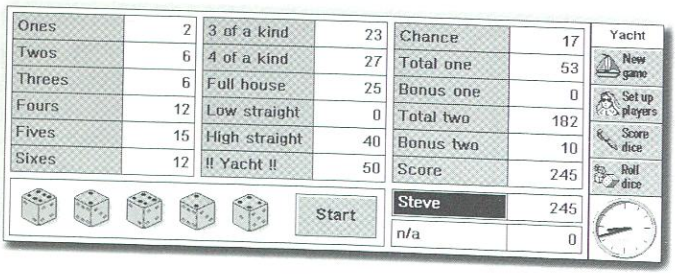
Yacht

Not a sailing game, but a version of the well known dice game of a similar (but copyrighted) name. The game itself is similar to Poker Dice, but uses standard 'spotted' dice instead. There have been a number of versions of this game for Psion computers in the past but this one is certainly the best, particularly with the added convenience of the touch-sensitive screen. Scoring is just a matter of tapping the appropriate blank box on the screen, and the correct score is instantly applied and totalled.

Theole

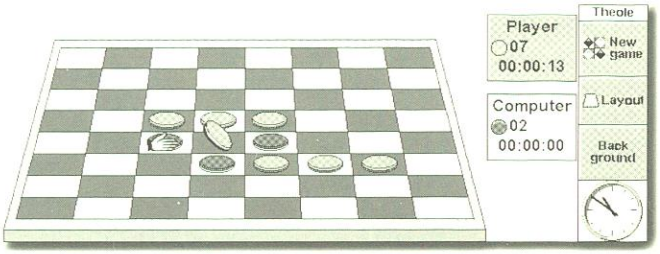
This is actually *Othello*, or *Reversi* as it is known in the US. Two players take turns to place a single piece on a draughts/chess board. All pieces are double sided: white on one side, black on the other. The aim is to place your pieces so that they encompass one or more of the opponent's colour, which allows you to flip over their pieces from their colour to yours. Again, Purple have thrown in the kitchen sink in terms of features, but the best part is the way the pieces perform an animated somersault (screen shot opposite) instead of merely flashing from one colour to the other.

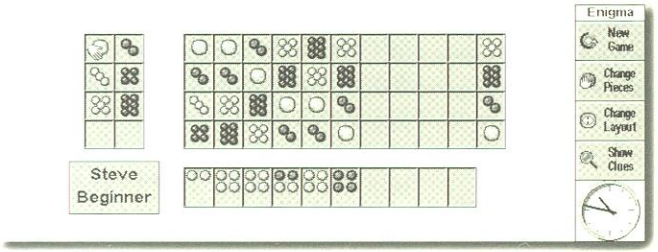
This is a classic game that takes ten seconds to learn but much longer to master, and is an entertaining diversion for whenever you have an odd five minutes to spare.



Yacht—the best ever version of a popular dice game

Thoele, and those fabulous animated pieces





Enigma. It looks complicated here, but it only takes a minute to learn the rules

Enigma

Enigma is a logic puzzle just like *Mastermind*, the old board game from around 1970. The object is to match a random sequence of shapes (representing the numbers 1-6), by making a series of educated guesses. Every time you guess you get clues as to how many pieces you guessed correctly, and how many where you got the right number, but the wrong position.

This is a challenging test of your deductive skills, and can be configured to various skill levels that allow a sequence of up to six pieces in a group of eight, with duplicate numbers allowed.

Conclusion

Overall, Purple Software have played it very safe with this games pack. They're all beyond criticism as well proven classics with guaranteed appeal. If you have a penchant for classic board games then *5Pack* is definitely for you—if you prefer your games a little more offbeat then you should probably look at Psion's 'Games Arcade' instead.

Steve Clack

5Pack

From: All major Psion dealers

Availability: now

Contact: Purple Software Ltd
Tel: 0171 3877777

Runs on: Series 5/Geofox One

Supplied on: 3.5" floppy disk

Price: £39.95 including VAT

Rating:

Games Arcade

Although it runs on the Series 5 and contains the same number of games as Purple Software's *5Pack*, Psion's latest 'Games Arcade' will appeal to a very different set of gamers.

Whereas the *5Pack* concentrates on 'classic' games from the pre-computer era, everything on Games Arcade has been created purely for the computer.

Stigma5

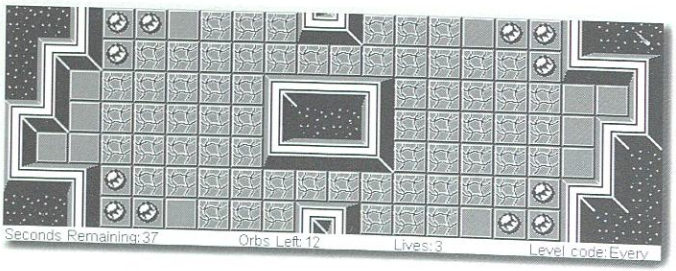
A clone of *Stigma* from Psion's *Games Deluxe* for the 3a/3c (issue 5). Stigma involves 'driving' a ball around a maze-like track using the arrow keys, or 'dragging' the ball around with the pen. The ball slips, slides and rebounds as you try to control it, and some of the tiles speed up, slow down or add random bounces to the ball as it passes over them. This isn't merely a test of hand-eye coordination though, as the mazes each have different puzzles to solve and hazards to avoid in order to find your way out within the variable time limit allotted to each of the 100 levels.

I enjoy this mix of strategy and dexterity in games, and found *Stigma5* both entertaining and challenging. If you've already played the original Stigma then this version doesn't offer anything especially new. There is a clever interactive tutorial for the game, but it's all so simple that this is superfluous. As with all the games in both this collection and the Purple Software *5Pack* there is extensive online help for all games, but again this is generally not necessary.

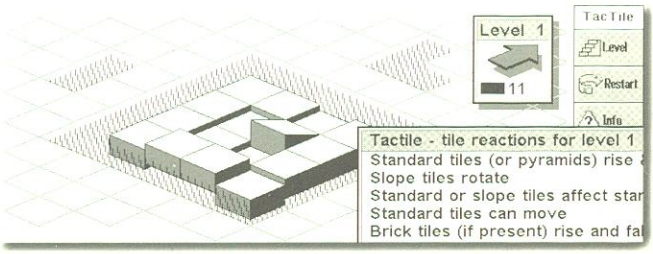
I found the levels substantially easier to complete by steering with the pen rather than the keyboard, but I preferred the greater challenge of using the keyboard arrows to manoeuvre. If you play this game on the bus or train then be sure to turn the sound effects off first, as some of the shrill bleeps, squeaks and human screams (yes, really) will drive your fellow passengers to distraction.

TacTile

A new arrival to the Psion platform, *TacTile* is another multi-level game, where each stage involves 'flattening' all the tiles in a 3-D perspective view so that they're at the same height. The



Roll the ball—Stigma5



A tough and unusual brain teaser—TacTile

tricky part is that the various plain tiles, sloping tiles, bricks, balls and so on behave differently in each level. Tips are available to give clues in each of the 32 levels. I found this game initially frustrating, but got more interested as I persevered with its logic. This is strictly one for brain teaser fans though, and is really more of a puzzle than a game.

Bomz5

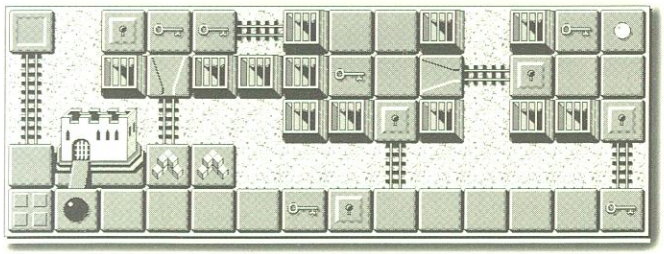
Another Series 3 rip-off, this time from *Psion Games 3a*, I always rated this as the all-time most enjoyable game for the Series 3. A purely personal view, of course, but Bomz combines a series of clever puzzles with a little bit of arcade style 'dodge the baddies' chasing—a bit like a thinking person's Pac-Man. The puzzles are more insidious than those in *Stigma5*, and strategy plays a much bigger part. Most of the game is spent pondering where to move to next—how to handle the various obstacles, bombs, sliders, warp tiles, homing bombs and so on.

This version offers 100 levels, including 20 new ones not available on the 3a/3c version. Otherwise the game is almost identical to the original. In both Bomz5 and *TacTile* you can even create your own levels, though hardly anyone is likely to try.

Bomz5 is a clever and satisfying game, and a welcome addition to the Series 5 gamers arsenal.

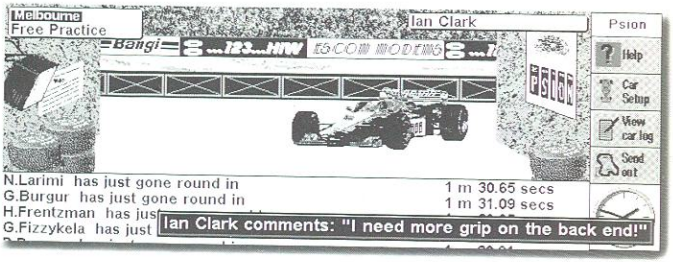
Team Psion

A completely original game, Team Psion attempts to bring the excitement of



Bomz5. A fascinating challenge

Formula One motor racing to the small computer screen.



Don't expect to be steering a racing car around the track in *Team Psion* though—it's a little more subtle than that. The game begins at the start of a racing 'season', where you name your two drivers and allocate part of your limited budget to that all important car development, the level of hospitality you wish to provide to your team sponsors and guests during the first race weekend, and how generous you wish to be with the team's accommodation for the weekend. These factors will affect your sponsors' perception of the team, the cars' performance and the morale of your precious drivers.

Next you'll be given the lowdown on the first circuit, Melbourne, which will give you clues when setting up the car. For each race you must separately optimise both front and rear wing settings, tyre pressures, gear spacing and ratios, and the brake balance between front and rear. These can all be set at values between 0 and 9, and these settings will depend upon whether each circuit is predominantly straight or twisty, whether it is hard on tyres, brakes, etc.

The various car settings are optimised by taking each driver out on three 'free practice' runs, and looking at your lap times. If your settings are a long way off the mark then the drivers will give you feedback like "I need more grip on the front end", which means you should increase your wing settings accordingly. Lap times should drop steadily as you approach the best possible settings for each circuit, and you get further feedback on performance as lap times for the other 24 drivers flash up on screen.

The next stage is the 'qualifying' session, where each driver gets another three attempts to improve the car setup. This is identical to the free practice runs.

Following the qualifying session you'll be presented with a view of the relative grid positions of all 26 cars, and be asked whether each driver should start off on slicks, intermediate or rain tyres (based on the prevailing weather conditions) and whether to plan for a one, two or three stop tyre change/refuelling strategy. You'll then see the lights change to green (well, grey), and the race begins.

'Animation' in the game is limited to a few views of cars flashing past on screen, but during the race there's a lot to keep you occupied. The relative posi-

tions of both your drivers are shown at all times, and information on other drivers' overtaking, pit stops and retirements flash up at regular intervals. Your starting grid positions will have been based on car setup performance, but during the race you can tell either driver to drive aggressively, hard, normally, conservatively, nurse the car to come into the pits at any time. You can check whether you're over-cooking it by looking at the oil temperature and tyre condition from the 'Telemetry' screen, and it's most important not to push too hard for too long, lest you blow it—quite literally.

Each race takes ten minutes or so to play through, but the whole time must be spent watching the various displays and interacting with the drivers in order to get through each race, let alone win. Weather can also change at short notice, so be prepared to hop into the pits for a quick tyre change at any time.

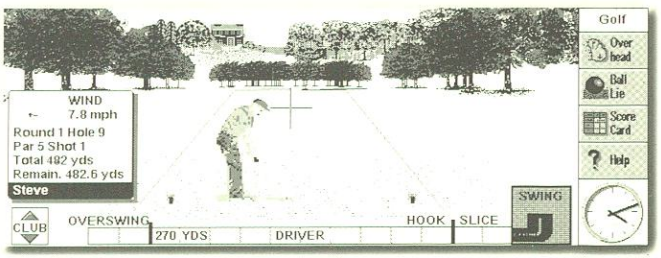
Success in *Team Psion* involves careful planning of finances for each race and meticulous attention to car setup. For the first few 'seasons' you'll probably come last in every race and drop out by the third or fourth due to lack of funds. The game becomes very engrossing as you play it more, and most people will find themselves jotting down car settings for each circuit in the quest for the perfect lap time, and so the best grid positions.

Team Psion is one of the most offbeat games I've come across for the Psion, but it's very well rounded with a genuine feeling of involvement. Most importantly it gives a real feeling for the flavour and excitement of motor racing, which on such a tiny computer is really quite impressive.

Golf

Known to all Series 3 veterans as Steve Litchfield's *Fairway*, *Golf* is another game recycled from *Psion Games 3a*. There are a few improvements in the Series 5 version, with the obligatory pen input, plus the appearance of water hazards, improved sound effects (complete with twittering birds) and refined graphics.

Golf follows the usual computerised golf game protocol of requiring one keypress (or screen tap) to start each swing of the club, a second to control the extent of the swing, and a third to control the ball spin. Familiarity with *real* golf isn't necessary in the game, though you'll need to learn the meaning



of 'par' from the online help. True golfers can always elect to manually select club types for each shot, but this is purely optional.

Golf is really just a reincarnation of an old favourite, but is enjoyable and challenging enough to appeal to golfers and non-golfers alike.

Conclusion

These games are all less conventional than those in the *5Pack*, and their appeal is a very personal matter. Personally, I have a definite preference for *Games Arcade*, but more traditional gamesters will probably find the opposite. In both cases at least 60% of the material is recycled from old Series 3 games, but this will only affect those who have upgraded. If you want some good games for your Series 5 then *5Pack* and *Games Arcade* both offer excellent value, and enough good games to keep you happy for many hours.

Steve Clack

Games Arcade

From: All major Psion dealers

Availability: Dec '97 / Jan '98

Contact: n/a

Runs on: Series 5/Geofox One

Supplied on: PC floppy disk

Price: £TBA

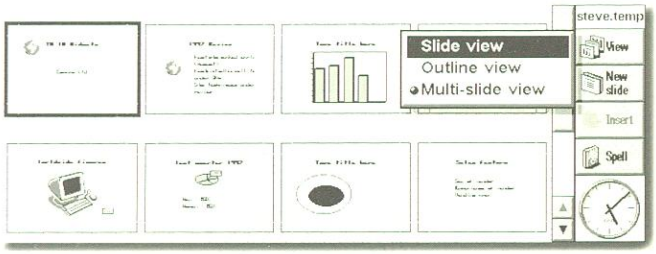
Rating:

Presentation Maker

Amidst all the animated discussions regarding the different feature sets of the Series 5 and Series 3, one particular improvement has massive significance. The new EPOC32 operating system is fully graphical from the bottom up, and has made it possible to create applications that would have seemed worlds away on the largely text-only Series 3 range.

Most Series 5 owners will already have experienced the possibilities of the built-in WYSIWYG object-oriented applications. The precise control over fonts, artwork and placement extend to both the screen and the printing system and are fully utilised in Psion's new *Presentation Maker*. It's also a testament to Psion's software-building philosophy that the entire program is only 130K in size, compared to tens of megabytes for the equivalent program on a desktop computer. Given the application's relatively small size it's disappointingly slow to load, with times of over 15 seconds being common even for small presentations.

Designed as a palmtop equivalent to *Microsoft PowerPoint*, and supplied with convertors to and from that format (version 7 and upwards), Presentation Maker does just what you'd guess from the title. Slides of text, graphics, charts and tables can be constructed in what turns out to be a surprisingly intuitive



Viewing a group of 'slides'

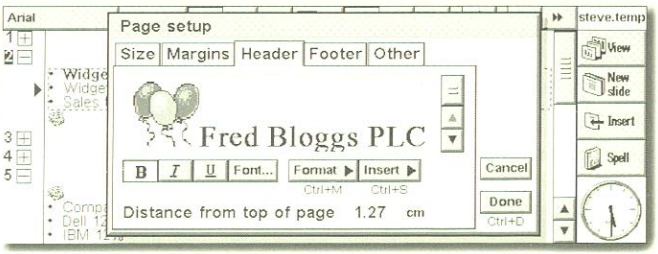
environment. Slides can be viewed individually or together in thumbnail or outline form before being either sent to a printer or converted into Microsoft PowerPoint for presentation on a PC or Macintosh computer.

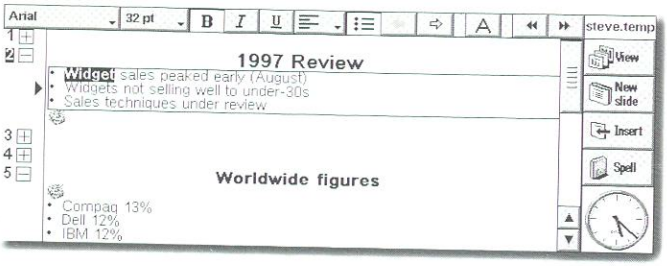
The interface is very much a cross between WORD and a full object-based drawing package. Long after placing elements onto a page they can be re-sized, moved, edited or deleted, with the familiar eight 'grab handles' clearly denoting the selected element.

Slides are created by choosing from the built-in selection of eight 'standard' types, though it would have been nice to have had the chance to create my own standards. As it is, automatic customisation is limited to putting content in the page header and footer, though this is only then visible in the print preview or on the hard copy. Speaking of which, the printing of your efforts onto paper or transparencies is obviously a major part of Presentation Maker's *raison d'être*, and is also the only area where I encountered a problem. On the review copy (a late 'beta'), clip art refused to print, though Psion are aware of the problem and have assured that it will be fixed in the final release version. I liked the option to print four slides to a page for proofing, and this feature alone should save a few trees from an untimely demise.

Text can be typed directly into the example fields, with full control of font and alignment when in slide or outline mode. The thumbnail mode is only used for selecting a particular slide to edit, but it's well implemented and very

Using the header facility to work around Presentation Maker's lack of master pages





Viewing a presentation's content in outline mode

useful nevertheless. Graphics are inserted using the toolbar button or through the menu options, and can be superimposed if necessary. One thing I thought a trifle awkward was that the 'Control' key needs to be depressed while dragging in order to move a graphical element.

Each slide is numbered, with the rearrangement of slides within a presentation all being done by the slightly cumbersome method of quoting slide numbers. The interface is very tightly matched to the 'look and feel' of the built-in applications and works well in practice. Experts will quickly find that the outline view is the most useful for getting the initial presentation content in place, with bulleted points being especially well-handled.

Very welcome are the comprehensive built-in help screens and the way the whole program can be driven entirely from the keyboard if necessary.

For the very first time on a Psion palmtop it's now possible to construct a slide presentation while on the move that would not embarrass you in a business meeting. While on the move, Presentation Maker gives you one more profitable use for the machine, and further enhances its already significant benefit to the serious business user.

Steve Litchfield

Presentation Maker

From: All major Psion dealers

Availability: Dec '97 / Jan '98

Contact: n/a

Runs on: Series 5/Geofox One

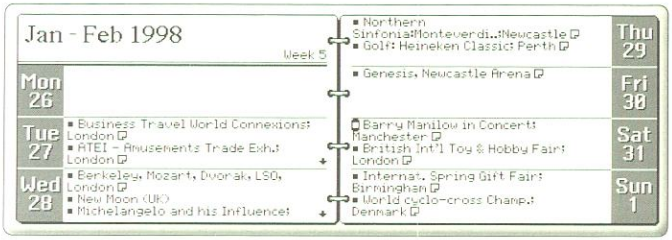
Supplied on: PC floppy disk

Price: £TBA

Rating:

Agenda Companion

The 1998 update to On Board Info's excellent 1997 'Notable Dates and Events', this product provides a comprehensive source of useful dates for your diary. The software works by installing first onto a PC running Windows. You then pick which categories of events you want to be installed onto your Series 3a/3c, Siena or Series 5, and the program then transfers the entries into a new AGENDA file on your Psion. This AGENDA can either be kept separate or merged into your existing diary.



The PC setup routine allows selection from a huge number of categories, covering all major industry, sporting and cultural events the UK, USA, France and Germany. Apart from giving details of all your favourite trade exhibitions, theatre events, horse races and concerts it also covers all national and religious holidays in over 60 countries, so it really is a very complete reference.

Once I had loaded in all the categories that interest me I found myself browsing through the resulting AGENDA file just to find out what interesting events were on the horizon. If you find events of interest then most of them include an attached memo containing some further details and in many cases a contact telephone number too.

As well as this immensely useful AGENDA add-on the program also includes an HTML-based 'Useful Information' section covering conversion factors, formulae, clothing and paper sizes, Zodiac signs and so on. The program includes a basic HTML text browser, but will also run inside the Psion Web browsers.

Provided you have access to a PC then this software has to be the most useful Psion add-on ever, and at only £12.95 represents astonishing value for money. *See back cover of this issue for a FREE offer to Palmtop readers.*

Steve Clack

Agenda Companion

From: On Board Info

Availability: now

Contact: See back cover

Runs on: 3a/c/Siena/S5/Geofox

Supplied on: Floppy disk or CD

Price: £12.95 (FREE to readers)

Rating:

Programming Psion Computers

For the past decade or so the mainstay for the OPL programmer has been the Psion-published 'OPL Programming Manual', originally included with all Series 3a machines, but later available directly from Psion at around £10. If you are interested in coding on Psion machines you would have been acutely aware that there were few other useful books available on the subject.

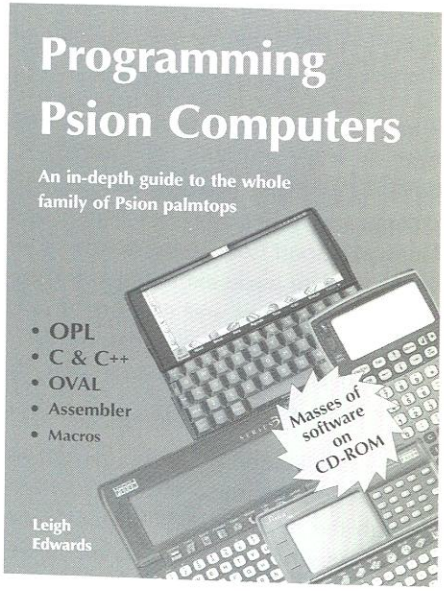
This new programming book, written by Leigh Edwards at EMCC, a software and consultancy company, is aimed at becoming your main source of reference for OPL programming. Leigh has used his knowledge gained from developing Psion programs to produce a veritable programmers 'bible': one single volume that will give the answers to all your coding questions and provide a detailed guide to all of the language options and SDKs. The author explains that his motivation for producing this book was that he would have given his right arm for such a guide when he began Psion development himself.

As the title suggests, the book covers the complete range of Psion machines, from the Series 3, 3a, 3c, Siena and Series 5 machines through to the industrial HC and Work*about* units. As you can imagine, it takes a lot of pages to cover such a variety of machines, which makes for a big book—640 pages. It is published in a soft-back format, A5-sized (imagine the Psion OPL Programming Guide, but about three times the thickness). Also included with the book is a free CD-ROM of programming tools and source code.

The book is aimed mainly at OPL programmers, though it does touch on assembler, C and OVAL (Psion's answer to Visual Basic). Despite C++ being featured on the cover, there are really only a couple of pages specific to this language, and none of the other languages enjoy the magnificent attention to detail that OPL receives.

What's inside?

The main content of the book is the 20-odd chapters covering all aspects of developing software for these palmtops:



from the fundamentals of SIBO, the hardware system used by the 16-bit Psions, the file system, how to use the I/O system through to engineering the user interface and some excellent sections on OPL programming references and techniques. The Series 5 is covered too: 60 pages of hardware, software and EPOC32 operating system details and OPL32-specific techniques. There's even a chapter on distributing your software and an excellent 'contacts and sources' section giving key Psion-related web sites and e-mail addresses.

I'm sure most people will find the OPL Reference section the most useful part of the book, and at over 160 pages it's also the largest chapter. The commands are grouped together by function, e.g. memory management, event handling and so on, and the book also has a 38 page index to allow alphabetical searches. The OPL chapter is a complete reference showing OPL commands across the entire Psion range, including the Series 5. And when I say complete, I *mean* complete—every single OPL command is listed in full, showing how it operates on all seven Psion machines.

As you can imagine there is quite a lot of information to pick up, but the clear style in which the entries are listed shows precisely which machines each command applies to, and any differences in usage that you should be aware of from machine to machine. One area where this reference really stands out over the Psion OPL book is in its list of bugs and idiosyncrasies connected with OPL commands. Any known problems are described in the entry notes, along with workarounds where appropriate. Previously this information had to be gleaned from on-line sources, from other programmers, or through trial and error.

The free CD-ROM

Included with the book is a 60 megabyte programmers' treasure trove. This free CD-ROM contains OPL source, samples of code, and useful shareware/freeware programs to help the Psion programmer. The disk has about 140 directories containing various programming utilities ranging from emulators (full PC emulators for the Psion 3a, Siena and Work*about* are provided), a Series 5 demo, an OVAL development demo, the famous 'Psionics' reference files and over 200 OPL and C programs covering everything from producing OPL help files through to animating sprites. All in all, you can search through over 36,000 lines of OPL code and 20,000 lines of Psion C source.

The Series 5 coverage includes a complete application, giving the heavily commented framework of an event-driven OPL program that allows a pen-driven, toolbar-based program to be put together very quickly. Similarly, the OPL16 coverage includes one of the authors own programs—a fully featured demonstration of all the key techniques required to complete an application.

Another useful resource is a set of text files containing Psion-related notes and snippets from various on-line sources forming a huge 'frequently asked questions' (FAQ) list. If you have a Psion coding question, there's a good chance you'll find the answer right here.

In case you're not sure of the keyword you should be looking for, one section of the book gives an incredible 1400 entry index detailing the contents of the CD-ROM by topic, covering entries as diverse as 'Setting auto switch-off in OPL' to 'Extracting the sunrise/sunset times from the World app'. This section forms a very useful place to start a search.

The CD is readable on a variety of machines: I had no problem reading the program source code and text files on my Mac and Unix workstations as well as a PC running DOS, Windows 3.1 and Win95. The CD-ROM files are also available from EMCC on floppy disks or Zip disk format for a small additional charge.

The collection of code examples, questions and answers from various on-line sources and the utilities make this CD a very useful resource. In my opinion, the CD-ROM alone is worth the price of the book.

Summary

What the book doesn't provide is a programming tutorial. If you want to learn OPL from scratch you're better off sticking to Psion's own OPL Programming Guide (the text of which is provided on the CD). At the other end of the scale, Leigh recommends that commercial developers should buy the OPL SDK. If, however, you're like me, using OPL for your own utilities or maybe even shareware, this book is excellent.

Overall, *Programming Psion Computers* is just what serious programmers have been waiting for—it's time to shelve that copy of the OPL Programming Guide and start using this book instead. With the free CD-ROM it's excellent value for money and a must-have for the Psion programmer.

Rick Andrews

Leigh Edwards is the author of *Palmtop*'s own Programmers' Workshop series.

Programming Psion Computers

From: EMCC

Availability: now

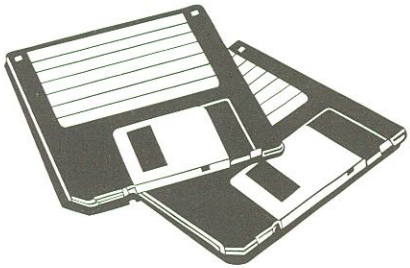
Contact: tel: 01606 861027, or see the advertisement on page 114 of this issue.

Price: £29.95 plus postage

Rating:

The Installation game

In this final instalment of a two part article, Steve Clack looks at how to get software installed onto your Series 3a, 3c or Siena



In the first part of this article in issue 14 we looked at the basics of files and directory structures and the principles of 'zipped' files.

Before looking at the various methods available to unzip programs and install them manually, let's first examine a more painless way to get the job done:

Control files

If you have a PC and you are installing a piece of commercial software there is usually an easier way out. The majority of recent commercial programs come with a Windows-based installation program known as *Psi-Setup*. This looks for a 'Control' file on whatever disk you are installing from, and from it creates directories and deposits all the correct files into the right places without any user intervention. The control files are nothing more than a simple text 'script' that gives the correct *path name* of each file to be installed, but Psi-Setup will only work on programs that have one of these '.CTL' files specifically created for them. Shareware and freeware programs occasionally come with a suitable control file, but in order to keep their file sizes down they are rarely supplied with Psi-Setup itself.

To load a program using Psi-Setup just connect your Psion to the PC and follow the simple step-by-step instructions that appear on screen.

If you have an Apple Macintosh computer you can now use programs designed for Psi-Setup, as the new *PsiMac* software has its own Install routine (under the PsiTools menu) that handles installation using the very same control files used by the Windows software.

If you don't have a PC or Mac you can still take advantage of control files by using a useful piece of freeware that runs directly on your Series 3a/3c/Siena. The program is called *Psion Setup* (written by Jochen Siegenthaler, available from the usual shareware sources as SETUP.ZIP), and it allows you to dump all the files directly onto your Psion, then have it put them all into the correct places, intelligently checking for available disk space before proceeding. The author even plans to release a new version that will also uninstall complex programs, automatically using the same control file to hunt down every component file and meticulously delete them one-by-one. A Series 5 version is also in the pipeline.

More savvy shareware authors may well begin to include 'CTL' files with their software as time progresses, but in all other cases the user is forced to put all the files in place manually.

More on unzipping

Unzipping still remains a bit of a mystery to some novices. 'Zipped' files (or *archives*, as they are more correctly known) are basically comprised of one or more files, all compressed down into a single file. This single file is easier to download across the Internet than a whole batch of files, and because the 'zipping' process uses some clever compression techniques the resulting 'ZIP' file is always much smaller than the sum of the original parts.

If you download a piece of shareware or freeware from the Internet it will almost always be compressed in this way, and you can't begin to install the software buried within it until you decompress the file into its original components.

Unzipping on another computer

The ZIP format is so universally common that almost every kind of desktop computer is able to handle ZIP files. If you have a PC running DOS then you can use a shareware program known as *PKUNZIP*, if you use a Windows PC then you can use one of the various versions of *WINZIP*, on a Mac you can use *ZipIt* or *StuffIt Deluxe*, and there are various equivalents for most other platforms. Just follow the instructions that come with the software you are using, and you'll see the single ZIP file miraculously unravel into any number of individual program files, ready for installation. If you really don't know where to look for a copy of an unzipping program for your particular computer then ask someone with the same type of machine, or the dealer from whom you purchased it.

Unzipping on a Psion

For the original Series 3 there was a very basic, command line driven program to allow unzipping on a Psion. This had a tendency to keel over due to lack of memory on the early machines, and was

PsiZip. A slick zipping/unzipping program that runs directly on your Psion

never a very friendly solution. Happily an excellent 3a/3c-based unzipping program now exists—the shareware 'PsiZip' by Serge Shestopalov handles full unzipping (and zipping) of files without the need for another computer. Just load the ZIP file into your Psion, and PsiZip will extract everything for you.

Most ZIP programs will simply extract all the component files in an archive into a single group, so you'll need to consult the accompanying README file (discussed in the last instalment) in order to work out where they all go.

Installation

Once everything is unzipped into its component parts, the next step is to put each of those parts into the correct directory on your Psion. Some of these directories will probably already exist on your machine, but others will need to be created before the files can be placed. The file list below is an extract from a sample 'CTL' file, which demonstrates a set of instructions showing where to put the four files in the list. The text instructs that the first two files in the list are to be placed in the '\APP\' directory, and the last two in a '\TK2\' directory immediately beneath it (a *child* directory, as described last issue).

```
[\APP\]SYSINFO.APP
[\APP\]FILEVIEW.APP
[\APP\TK2\]SYSINFO.~02
[\APP\TK2\]SYSINFO.~03
```

Sometimes the installation instructions may state that one or more of the files must be placed on the internal drive of your machine, and not on an SSD. Some programs refuse to run from flash SSD only, so be sure to take note of any special instructions.

For the files that are to go into existing directories simply use the 'Copy' command in the built-in *file selector* (accessed by pressing the <Tab> key from within the system screen) to transfer a duplicate of each to the correct locations. For those that require the creation of new directories go back up the directory tree (the '\APP\' directory in the case of the '\TK2\' directory above), and use the 'Make directory' command in the file selector. Then copy the files into the new directory as before. You can also use a program like *PsiWin* to perform the whole installation process—just follow the copy instructions for that program to transfer everything from the desktop computer.

Rather than using the rather crude file selector many people prefer either the more sophisticated FILES application of the Series 3c, or one of the many alternative file manager programs available. In the next issue we'll talk about file management in more detail, and if you're not familiar with how to perform the 'Copy' and 'Make directory' operations discussed here then you can find out more details then.

If you performed the unzipping directly on your Psion don't forget that the 'Copy' operation still leaves the original copies behind, so once you have successfully installed the program you can go back and delete this original copy of the unplaced files.

Making it work

Once you've placed all the necessary files for your program into their correct locations, all that is left is to create an icon for the program on your system screen so you can easily access it.

The instructions for your program will usually explain which is the main program file to be installed in the system screen, but if not it will be one of the '.APP' or '.OPA' files located in the '\APP\' directory on your machine. Once you know the name of the file, go to the system screen and use the left and right arrow keys to move the highlight to

where you want the program's icon to appear—by default it will be inserted directly to the left of the highlight.

Next hit <Psion><I>, which brings up the dialog box shown at the bottom of the page. Finally, use the arrow keys again to select the correct disk and the correct OPO or APP file, and press the <Enter> key. Your new program should now be in place and ready to run.

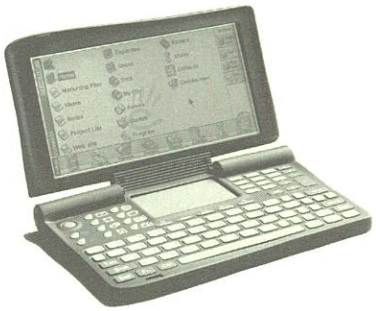
Internal RAM or SSD?

Remember that unless specifically mentioned in the documentation, most programs will run happily from either internal memory, flash or RAM SSDs. Generally speaking, flash SSDs are the most secure place to secure program files, as unlike word processor and spreadsheet documents they don't generally change. There are a few exceptions to this, such as log files that keep track of your preference settings for the program, or perhaps the high score settings for a game. The documentation will normally point out these exceptions, and may ask that these files are always kept in internal memory rather than on an SSD.

The key to successful software installation is always to read the instructions very carefully, and if things don't work at first then retrace your steps through the instructions to be sure that everything is in the right place, and to ensure that you haven't inadvertently mis-keyed the name of any of the directories you have been required to create.

Running with the FOX

Steve Clack looks at the very first Psion-compatible computer —the Geofox One



The first ever Psion-compatible computer is certainly the dawn of an era, but how does it compare to the *real* thing?

For those who have not yet come across this machine (to date it has been publicised almost exclusively on the World Wide Web), the Geofox One is produced by Geofox Ltd, an independent company, and runs EPOC32 (the operating system used on the Psion Series 5). Apart from the underlying operating system, the Geofox comes with all the same software as supplied with the '5', plus Psion's e-mail, fax and web browsing software, Purple Software's Chess game, and a version of Palmtop BV's En Route mapping software for the UK and USA.

For practical purposes the Geofox should run 100% of the software designed for the Series 5, and it will behave just as though you were running it on one of Psion's own computers. There are still a number of significant differences between the 'fox and the five however, and here's a rundown on the new machine.

The hardware

At around 150 x 230mm in size the Geofox One occupies 50% more area than the Series 5. This excludes it from the realm of true palmtop computers, and into what some of the computer press have recently been referring to as 'baggables'. This will clearly put the

Geofox
Help
Extras
Menu
Zoom
Hang Up
Connect
App
System
AC
C
MIN
MR
M-
M+
Caps
Tab
Shift
Esc
Fn
Ctrl
Del
Ins
PgUp
PgDn
Home
End
– Contrast +
Actual Size

The back side of the Geofox One, showing the PC card release controls, Infrared port, speaker, hinge release catch and backup battery cover

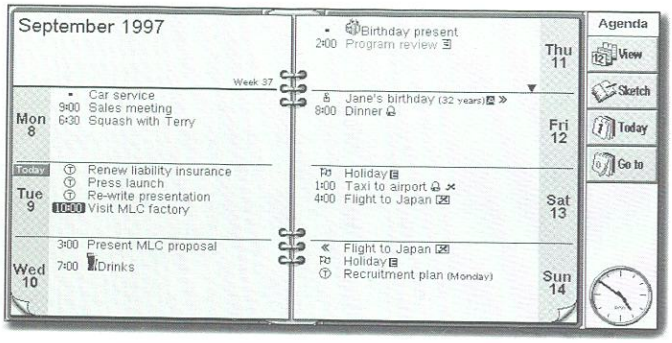
Geofox One outside the consideration of many buyers, and in fact anyone who needs their 'palmtop' to fit inside a pocket. Many users don't actually need to keep their machine in a pocket though, and simply require something lightweight and easily transportable that will fit into a briefcase, rucksack or handbag. For these users the Geofox offers a larger screen and an internal PC card slot for additional mass storage or a modem. This is all in a package that weighs in at only 25g heavier than the Series 5.

The screen

The Series 5 screen is 640x240 pixels in size, and at 640x 320 pixels the Geofox screen is exactly one third deeper, which translates directly into one third more spreadsheet cells, text lines or database fields visible at any time. This comparatively huge screen is undoubtedly the Geofox's biggest attraction, and it's a delight to use, particularly for spreadsheets, word processing, and for the built-in Internet application, where the maximum possible screen area effectively translates into less scrolling around.

With the backlight switched on, power consumption is over 220mAh, at least 50% higher than the already battery hungry backlight of the Series 5. This is by no means unrealistic, as the Geofox screen occupies almost 11,800 square millimetres, 75% more than the '5'. The Geofox backlight is less bright than the Series 5's when operating on batteries, and the screen is thus considerably less clear in dim light. If you plug in the mains adaptor the backlight can be set to a brighter level, which offers similar contrast to the Series 5 screen, but with a bluish rather than a green glow. With the backlight off and in reasonable lighting conditions the Geofox screen really scores over the Series 5's, as the absence of a touch sensitive layer makes the screen less reflective and improves the contrast.

The Geofox screen is on a friction hinge mechanism, and can be set to any angle relative to the keyboard. In certain circumstances I even found it comfortable to use it almost completely flat, and it's useful to be able to make fine adjustments to the angle in order to further reduce reflections onto the screen surface.



So big that it almost seems like a paper diary in front of you—AGENDA on the Geofox One

The mouse pad

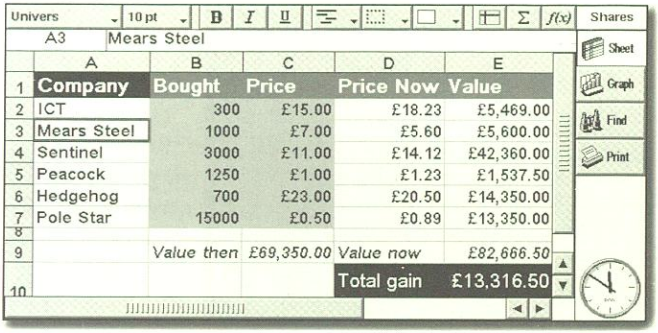
Geofox use a 'Glidepoint' mouse pad on their machines in place of the S5's touch-sensitive screen. These are commonplace on laptop computers and the people at Geofox claim that because their machine is designed more as a laptop computer replacement than a true palmtop, then the mouse pad is more appropriate than a touch-sensitive screen. I have to disagree with them, as in every conceivable circumstance I found the mouse pad slower and less elegant to use than a pen (or a finger) on the screen.

The problem is that it is simply too fiddly. It can be set to any of three sensitivity settings, but even on the most sensitive one it still takes a couple of swipes to traverse the entire Geofox screen. For the occasional selection of a menu option or a block of text in WORD it's usable, but for creating a drawing in SKETCH it would have most users tearing their hair out.

Many users (myself included) try to avoid the use of pointing devices in favour of learning the equivalent keyboard shortcuts. If you fall into this category then you won't find the lack of a touch-sensitive screen to be a great loss, but if you tend to rely on these devices then you may find the Geofox a disappointment. I'd recommend potential Geofox buyers to at least try one for themselves before making a judgement.

The keyboard

Keyboards are always a very personal thing. As a long-time Series 3a/3c user I have to confess that I never got the hang of fast and accurate typing with them, even after years of use. As a result I embraced the Series 5's superb keyboard with open arms and was immediately skeptical about the Geofox keys. Individual keys are much smaller than on the 5 and the vertical spacing between rows is tighter. The keys are 'elastomeric', meaning that they're constructed from a soft rubber-like compound. This soft, almost spongy material feels a little odd to begin with, but once I got used to its unconven-



Up to 27 rows of spreadsheet cells in view at any time. Another benefit of the Geofox's giant screen

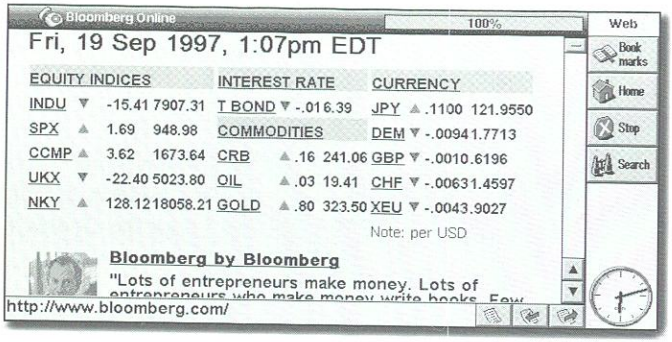
tional feel I really grew to like the Geofox keyboard.

The keys register a satisfying click when pressed, and although it's certainly not up to the Series 5's exceptional standard it is largely a pleasure to use. I say 'largely' because there are a few quirks that some people will find irritating. The first oddity is that the 'Esc' key is in the bottom left corner of the main keyboard instead of the top left. Secondly, the 'Enter' key is a bit odd: it's the same size as the 'Delete' key, and with its left-pointing arrow symbol it looks almost identical. I soon got used to the differences though, and with just a little practice could easily manage 40 words per minute with it, at least 25% better than I ever did on the 3a/3c.

Apart from the main keyboard, some of the additional keys are not beyond criticism, and I certainly found the *Extras*, *Menu*, *Zoom*, *Connect* and *System* keys fiddly to use. These provide key equivalents to the softkeys around the edge of the Series 5 screen, plus a one-touch Internet connection button. They're placed in a row between the main keyboard and the mouse pad (see photo on page 58) and are so close to the row of numeric keys directly beneath them that it's a little too easy to press the wrong key.

The overly tight vertical spacing of the separate numeric keypad in the top right corner also makes it awkward to use unless you either have especially small fingers or tap the numbers with the blunt end of a pen or pencil instead. If Geofox had decided to leave out the 'AC' and 'C' calculator buttons they could have spaced the numeric keys more generously and solved the problem at a stroke. Entering large volumes of numbers into a Series 5 spreadsheet has always been tedious without a dedicated numeric keypad, and although an improvement, the Geofox misses a golden opportunity to score major points over its mentor in this area.

The application selection keys to the left of the glidepoint device provide one touch access to all the major built-in applications with the exception of



A realistic prospect — Browsing the World Wide Web on the Geofox

SKETCH, which is accessed from the Extras bar together with En Route and Chess. A pair of adjacent buttons toggle the backlight on or off, and bring up the infrared send/receive menu. The positioning of the buttons is fine, and for regular e-mail and WWW users it's satisfying to have access to these applications without having to resort to the Extras bar. The good e-mail integration of the Geofox is further reinforced by the dedicated 'Connect' button.

Other hardware

Some other aspects of the Geofox hardware differ substantially from the Series 5: it doesn't enjoy the Series 5's inherent stability. It's perfectly solid when resting on a good flat surface, but tends to tip forwards when resting on a lap, or anywhere where the machine is tilted forwards slightly.

It doesn't have the S5's set of recording buttons, so it can't be used as a portable dictaphone, at least not with the machine in a closed position.

The PC (PCMCIA) card slot is *instead* of a CompactFlash slot, not in addition to it. PC cards are available in sizes far larger than CF cards at present, and are cheaper too. The disadvantage of this approach is that if you plan to use a PC card modem then you are forced to remove any memory card from the slot first. If part of the information you wanted to access was stored on the memory card then you're faced with having to transfer this to the machine's internal memory first. The easiest way to avoid this is to keep all of your data on the internal RAM instead. The Geofox is available in either 4MB or 16MB variants, and most people will find 16MB ample space without resorting to add-on cards. Prospective purchasers of the 4MB machine should be aware that less than 2MB is actually available for storage, which can be quite a limitation for all but the most modest users. As a result I'd recommend some serious thought before opting for the cheaper 4MB variant.

The PC card slot itself works without problems, and requires that you simulta-

neously press a button and push a switch on the back of the machine to eject the card. This prevents the card from being accidentally ejected, and avoids possible damage.

PC card modems have a notoriously high power drain, and when one is inserted the Geofox flashes up a warning that 'batteries are unable to power this PC card'. You *can* still use the PC card on batteries if you insist, but be prepared for less than half an hour of battery life.

The main pair of AA batteries are unusually situated on either side of the central hinge mechanism, each with its own separate compartment and access door. The backup battery is housed on the underside of the machine, beneath a screwed-down hatch. This could be a real problem for anyone faced with a low backup battery while on the move, because the hatch can only be opened by a small jeweller's screwdriver, and most people understandably don't even possess one of these, let alone keep one handy. Geofox don't supply a suitable screwdriver either, so sooner or later every Geofox owner will probably have to buy one.

The two halves of the Geofox's clamshell casing are held together with a small catch on the underside which keeps the machine firmly closed when not in use. The infrared and RS232 ports are side by side on the left of the machine, and the RS232 connector is larger than that on the Series 5, though the correct cable is supplied with every machine.

All Geofox's are also supplied with a CD-ROM containing 'EPOC Connect', a generically badged copy of PsiWin 2.

Software

All software designed for the Series 5 should run on the Geofox without problems. Many programs will run 'in a window', that is to say that they may not take advantage of the Geofox's larger screen—instead showing a blank strip of screen at the bottom. This will be particularly true of most Series 5 games, where the screen size tends to be hard-coded into the program. Some programs will automatically adjust themselves to use all the extra screen size, and some program authors are already ensuring that all their programs take full advantage of the Geofox. As far as the built-in software is concerned, everything adjusts itself to make full use of the larger screen at all times.

Apart from carrying 100% of the Series 5's built-in software, the Geofox One also sports Psion's complete e-mail/fax and World Wide Web suite, plus a copy of Purple Software's capable Chess game (reviewed in issue 13), and Palmtop BV's excellent En Route journey planning program (reviewed in issue 14). All the programs use every extra pixel of the Geofox screen, though En Route is not the complete version, offering only maps of the UK and USA, both at lower detail levels. With the

extra bundled software the Geofox is an exceptionally capable business tool, with every piece of software the average user is likely to need—all pre-loaded and ready to go. It even comes with batteries inserted, and the 'Professional' models include a Psion Dacom Gold Card V34 PC card fax modem with cables, and an auto voltage sensing international AC adaptor with interchangeable heads for UK, US and Western European sockets.

Geofox's documentation comprises a single 200 page manual covering everything. It's comparable with the Series 5 manual—in other words it contains enough to get you started, but completely skips over the more advanced functions, instead requiring the user to refer to the extensive on-line help system.

Conclusions

So would I recommend the Geofox One in preference to a Series 5? It depends entirely on your pattern of use for the machine. It can't hold a candle to the Series 5's pocketability—this is squarely designed for briefcase or handbag storage, and it lacks some of the 5's stylish attention to detail: the innovative keyboard, those neat and useful recording buttons, and the sometimes-indispensible pen input. If you prize screen area highly, and particularly if you do a lot of spreadsheets or word processing then the Geofox One may be for you. If you are a big fan of the Series 5's pen interface then you should probably look elsewhere, and similarly if non-standard keyboard layouts annoy you then you may find the Geofox a little irksome. If it is to be your only computer then you'll soon get used to the differences, and you may even *prefer* having the 'Esc' key in the bottom left corner rather than the top left—I do!

As a mobile communications machine the Geofox has much to recommend it. The Internal PC card modem slot reduces the need for excess cabling, the larger screen makes e-mailing, faxing and Web access more comfortable, and the dedicated 'Connect' button rounds the whole package off nicely.

Finally, note that the Geofox machines are only available directly by mail order, though Geofox offer a 14 day money-back trial offer.

A second opinion...

...on the Geofox One

by Pete Sipple

When I was first asked to give an independent second opinion on the first non-Psion Psion, I accepted with mixed feelings. Like many Psion owners, despite hardware gripes, flaking cases and backlight controversies, I have a certain loyalty to Psion machines. I wasn't sure how I'd feel about using Psion applications on a completely different piece of equipment.

'Different' is a very good way to describe the Geofox One. A Series 5 it ain't, so rather than repeating the machine's specifications, I'll tell you what, as a dedicated Series 5 user, I consider to be the pros and cons when compared side-by-side:

The good points

- The screen is simply gorgeous—large, positionable and easy to read with a very usable backlight. The absence of a touch screen makes for excellent clarity and screen contrast.
- The keyboard layout, or at least some of it. I'm a calculator user, and the dedicated numeric keypad makes a lot of difference.
- More software and up to *16 Megabytes* of RAM—wow!
- Communications. On-board e-mail software and a PC card slot make this machine a seriously attractive proposition for the mobile user who wants to fax, surf or mail from something less bulky than a laptop.

The bad points

- No touch screen. If I'd never tapped a Series 5 before I wouldn't know what I was missing, but the temptation to touch a Geofox screen is still very strong—even now, I still tap my 3c screen without thinking. Personally, I found the mouse pad unresponsive and a little fiddly, but I've been spoilt.
- The keyboard. Again, I've been spoilt with the 5's excellent keyboard. The Geofox's is still pretty good—I'd venture to say that it's better than a 3c's—but data entry is still less easy.

The differences

- Where's the 'Esc' key? On my PC and my Psions it's top left, on the Geofox it's *bottom* left. Not a problem, but old habits die hard and I still dive to the top left—which turns the machine off!
- No touchbar—it's nice that DATA, AGENDA and the rest have their own non-softkey button, but I had to hunt for the SYSTEM button, one of my commonly used keys.
- The icons. The on-screen icons for the applications like DATA and SHEET are the same as those on the Series 5, so why choose completely different symbols for the legends next to the hotkeys? An odd move.
- SKETCH—I may be missing something, but without pen input this application is arguably next to useless.

In summary

Geofox are obviously aiming this machine to be a small laptop—and that it is. The size, weight and connectivity options are all spot-on. I can see that many mobile users who like the idea of a powerful computer that's smaller than a laptop would be attracted to the Geofox One. It's small enough to be discrete, and gives the impression that it's not "just an organiser", the label that's so often (wrongly) applied to Psion's palmtops.

So would I use one? Personally, no, as the size of the Series 3 family and the Series 5 suits me fine. That said, there are times when the 5's small screen frustrates me. Squinting at a 5 whilst others struggle to balance a cumbersome laptop has always made me wonder why there wasn't a medium-sized alternative such as the Geofox One.

Just one question remains. Geofox have produced a machine with twice as much on-board RAM, built-in communications software, a route planner, and they've thrown in three years of hardware support—so why couldn't Psion?

With its large, clear screen, the excellent on-board EPOC applications and features this machine could well be a winner.

The Geofox is currently available in the UK and USA only. Please see page 112 for further contact details.

Four Geofox models are currently available:

With 4MB RAM
- £385 inc. VAT ($499)

With 4MB RAM/33.6K fax modem and worldwide AC adaptor
- £535 inc. VAT ($699)

With 16MB RAM
- £449 inc. VAT ($599)

With 16MB RAM/modem and AC adaptor
- £599 inc. VAT ($799)

The FIVE zone

In this new spot we look at the latest developments in the Series 5 world, and trace the growth of the product in these early months...

by Steve Clack
& Steve Litchfield

Over the past months there has been much wailing and gnashing of teeth concerning the issue of Series 5 bugs.

Following our discussions with Psion in the last issue, matters have come to a head with the Series 5 appearing on the BBC's *Watchdog* consumer program. Apparently more than 100 users had contacted the program to complain that they were not being offered an upgrade from the early 1.00 ROM release to the more recent 1.01 version. The new version has been shipping with all new machines since around September, but was previously not available as an upgrade—paid for or otherwise. As a result of the TV appearance Psion have now agreed to offer a free-of-charge upgrade to 1.00 ROM owners, and full details are given in the news section on page 8 of this issue.

Users should note that this 'maintenance' update is not related to the forthcoming ROM version 1.1 upgrade, which will be a chargeable set of program enhancements and additions, probably due out in the first quarter of 1998. ROM version 1.1 will really be the equivalent of purchasing a new version of a major software program for your PC—like moving from Microsoft Word 6 to Word 7. As the Series 5's built-in software is all housed in an internal ROM chip (see page 49/50 of issue 14), any upgrade involves partially dismantling your computer, so don't forget that your machine will have to go back to Psion to have the new chip fitted.

There *is* some talk that Psion may allow users to perform their own upgrades, but this will probably invalidate your warranty—not a good idea.

Worried?

Since our article on the version 1.00 bugs in the last issue we have had correspondence from a number of readers who had not come across any of the problems themselves, and were worried that there may be something horrible lurking in the background that was about to destroy their data. The reality is actually far less serious than this, and many users would never have discovered any problem with the 1.00 ROM had it not been for all the recent publicity.

Of course, the Series 5 should have been tested properly in the first place and not launched with software that contained any bugs. Secondly, given that most of the problems were identified and fixed in version 1.01, Psion should have issued an official list of what was and wasn't corrected to set everyone's mind at rest. Of course that would mean admitting that the Series 5 had bugs in the first place, never a line that Psion seem keen to take...

To be fair to Psion every computer system and software program has *some* bugs in it, no matter how small and obscure, and fixing bugs in ROM chips is always going to be expensive—a massive recall program doubly so. If we were running Psion, we might choose to keep problems as quiet as possible too. Nevertheless, in the interests of the good investigative name of *Palmtop* magazine, we've been digging for the dirty details. Read on...

What version am I?

Most Series 5s shipped up to at least September contained the offending 1.00 ROM chip. You can tell which version you have by pressing <Shift><Ctrl><Q> from the system screen to bring up the 'Machine information' dialog. The number in brackets following the first number in 'Software version' is not significant, this is merely the 'build' number of your machine.

What was wrong...

If your machine has ROM version 1.01 then this is the most up-to-date model at the time of going to press. Of course, if you've got a 1.00 ROM then you'll be wondering what the differences between the two versions are and whether it's worth making a fuss about.

As a side issue, there was also an early hardware problem, the infamous peeling paint on the case. If you find this

affliction then you should initially take it up with the dealer you purchased the machine from, who should resolve the problem for you. Psion solved the root cause of the trouble by changing case suppliers, and more recent machines seem to have had no problems. Moreover, glitches emerged in the PsiWin 2 software that converts S5 data into the various PC formats, most notably to do with not handling WORD files correctly and causing unnecessary activity on the PC serial ports. These were also sorted out within a few months, and v2.01 was released free on Psion's web site to address all the known problems. Full details of the PsiWin upgrade are given on page 7 of this issue.

It's the Series 5's internal software, though, that will ring the most alarm bells. Here's an informed (though not definitive) list of what's been fixed in the v1.01 machines:

WORD - in ROM version 1.00 it was impossible to print off specific pages in a document without getting the whole thing every time, no matter how many pages it contained. This has now been fixed.

SHEET - calculations in cells situated above frozen panes previously refused to update once the panes had been locked; there were some bugs in calculations involving the MIN/MAX functions; if two different cells referenced a cell which was then modified, they didn't always change correctly; date-formatted cells sometimes didn't keep the correct format; cell contents which overflowed into neighbouring cells could be displayed incorrectly; entering a (incorrect) formula such as '=SUM(A1:A2+A3)' used to crash the Psion; and there were various time rounding errors. These have all been fixed.

DATA - comma-delimited imports now work more reliably with version 1.01.

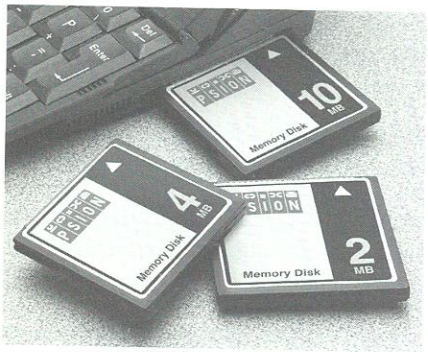
AGENDA - anniversary entries now get their dates carried through properly after setting an alarm.

Others - alarms now play properly even if the batteries are classed as 'low'; *Comms* is no longer hard coded to only use the '\Documents' folder; moving applications from disk to disk no longer confuses the Extras bar; re-arranging programs starting with the letter 'A' on the Extras bar no longer crashes the machine.

Perhaps this list will be a reassurance to those with the 'new' ROM and handy ammunition for those with the early version. There *are* more bugs, fixed and not fixed, but this covers the major ones.

One known bug that has not been fixed is that tabs can be set in centimetres in WORD, but are sometimes reported back in inches. It's also worth noting that many of the bugs people claimed to have found in the Series 5 turned out to be just features that worked differently to the Series 3 and were not being used properly. Note also that Psion may

deliberately have stopped short of fixing some of the minor bugs reported to them for fear of introducing new problems to previously stable code. This is normal programming practice.



Which CompactFlash?

Keen-eyed Series 5 owners will have noticed that Psion are not the only company selling the new CompactFlash storage cards, with *Simple Technology* cards (currently available from Clove Technology, see inside back cover for details) costing far less, and now offering storage sizes up to 32MB and rising, with the Psion cards still only available in sizes up to 10MB.

Apart from the considerable cost savings, the literature for Simple Technology also claims that they offer better (faster) read and write performance and lower power consumption than the Psion CFs. We've been putting some samples of both Simple Technology and Psion CFs through their paces for the past three months or so, and in general use we haven't seen any conclusive evidence in favour of either type, at least not when used on a Series 5 machine. In terms of power consumption the drain from CF disks is rated at well under 100mA from all disks when reading and writing, and even heavy users probably spend no more than a few minutes reading or writing to a CF in the course of a day, and most spend only a few seconds. The standby current for both types of CF is rated at only 1mA, so it would take over 1000 hours for a CF alone to drain your batteries.

Our conclusion from these 'real world' tests are that the performance issues really don't form a compelling reason to buy one type of CF in preference to the other, but the pricing differences *do*. Both cards were 100% reliable, so we can see no reason to pay up to almost *twice* the price for a Psion-branded CompactFlash.

One interesting point to note is that just like conventional PC hard disks, 'cluster' sizes increase with larger CFs. This means that on a smaller device even a one byte file may occupy perhaps 2 kilobytes. On a large disk the same file will occupy a minimum of 8K or more. Every file you save will occupy a multiple of the cluster size, wasting a little bit of space each time, unless of course a file is an exact multiple of the cluster size. On big CFs this can account for more than 25% of the total storage space available. There's nothing you can practically do to reduce this effect, but it's worth being aware that it exists.

Easy Project Management

...Using nothing more than your built-in AGENDA software

by Steve Litchfield

The original and somewhat ambitious title of this article was to be "Using AGENDA as a project management system". Now if you immediately think of Gantt charts, resource conflicts and A3 hard copy you're going to be rather disappointed. If you need those sort of features, you'll be better off with a dedicated project management application like Andy Clarkson's excellent PLAN (reviewed in issue 4).

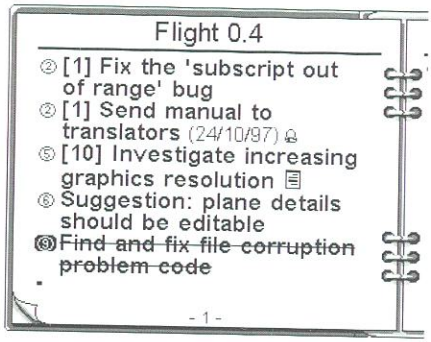
Most home or small business projects can be accomplished fairly easily, and with a little thought, using something a lot simpler. A long-time favourite for simple projects has been Purple Software's *Notepad Deluxe* (previously shareware, by Mark Esposito), which allows integration of project tasks and ideas with the built-in applications. In similar vein is *Topix*, the shareware outliner. However, seeing as these options both make heavy use of the built-in Psion software, why not go the whole hog and try to do without the third party applications completely?

The simple solution

At this point I turn you to the built-in AGENDA. Psion's flagship application is so versatile that there are as many ways of configuring it as there are individual owners, but I'll try to give a few pointers to show how I tackle the task of managing small projects.

As with my contact management article in the last issue, there's nothing definitive about any of my ideas, and I'll be happy if I've simply given you a thought or two that you can put into practice in your own use of AGENDA.

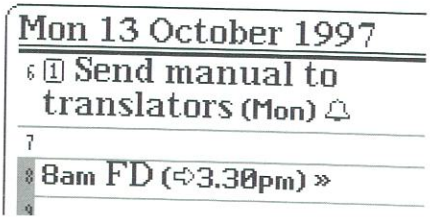
As a software author, I often have anything up to 10 'projects' on the go at


Flight 0.4
② [1] Fix the 'subscript out of range' bug
② [1] Send manual to translators (24/10/97)
⑤ [10] Investigate increasing graphics resolution
⑥ Suggestion: plane details should be editable
⑩ Find and fix file corruption problem code
- 1 -

any one time. Each project relates to a particular computer program and deserves its own to-do list. Adding in the current version number into the list title ensures I don't lose track of which problems apply to which version. As soon as a new program version is released, I rename the to-do list accordingly (see above).

A sample project

Imagine three new items for project 'Flight'. Firstly, a 'subscript out of range' bug is discovered and noted, with suitably high priority. At the same time, I make a note to send the program manual to the translators, something which needs to happen by a certain date in order for the translations to be ready for Flight's official launch. I therefore give the entry a due date and alarm to make sure I don't forget, plus a nice high priority to make sure it appears in AGENDA's Day and Week views as well. Finally, I've had the idea to increase the graphics resolution but am still gathering ideas on how to tackle the problem. For this, an entry with an attached memo is ideal, with all ideas and thoughts being poured into the memo. On the Series 5, exactly the same effect can be achieved by inserting a WORD object to create the memo.



One factor which a dedicated project management program would keep track of is the expected length of time each task will take, perhaps in man-hours or man-days. It's easy enough here to add a coded reference such as '[8]', or some such figure in brackets in plain text at the start of tasks which require significant amounts of time or money. If the task is then partly completed, it's a matter of seconds to edit the figure, perhaps adopting a system such as '[3/8]' to denote that three man-hours out of the total eight already spent. Scanning the to-do list gives an overview of the amount of resources still needed to complete this cycle of the project.

In my case there will also be some obviously lower-priority items, such as suggestions that users have made for future enhancements to 'Flight'. As each individual item is completed, I use the 'Cross out entry' feature to strike through the entry's text. On the 3a/3c, this automatically shunts the entry to the

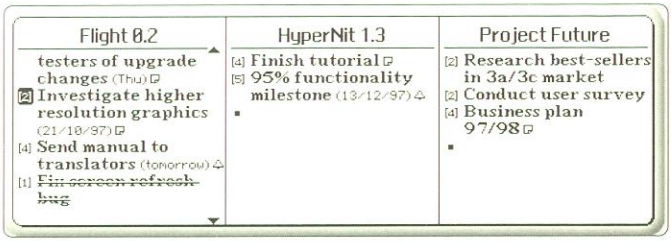
bottom of the list, where it stays out of the way until needed. A touch more work is needed to achieve the same effect on the Series 5, as the priority must be manually changed down to '9' (or similar) as well. Maybe Psion can fix this 'feature' in next year's ROM upgrade?

Please note that there's nothing unusual in how I'm using AGENDA. So many Psion users just use the to-do list feature as a simple shopping list, without realising how 'rich ' each entry can be. With due dates, alarms, attached memos, priorities and about a hundred different customisable settings, there is really very little you cannot achieve with a bit of effort.

Stretching the principle

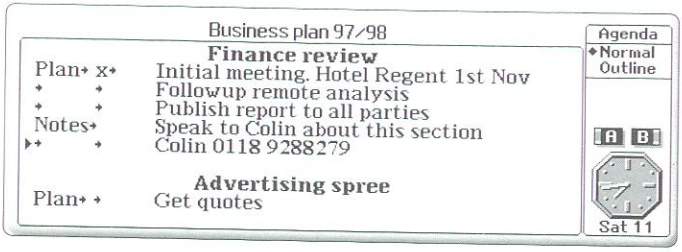
If you own a Siena, Series 3a or 3c, and need even 'more' structure to your project, you can expand individual tasks by using style information inside the attached memo or document. For example, consider a task marked as 'Establish 97/98 business plan'. It's got a priority and due date in the usual manner, with lots of extra content in the attached memo, but more expandable task detail is required. This project item might be broken down as shown over the page, with separate headings for each sub-task, each marked with <Control><HA> (i.e. hold the <Control> key down and type 'ha', to set the style of the current line to Header

Keeping track of tasks for each project using AGENDA's to-do lists


Flight 0.2
testers of upgrade changes (Thu)
[2] Investigate higher resolution graphics (21/10/97)
[4] Send manual to translators (tomorrow)
[1] Fix screen refresh bug
HyperNit 1.3
[4] Finish tutorial
[5] 95% functionality milestone (13/12/97)
Project Future
[2] Research best-sellers in 3a/3c market
[2] Conduct user survey
[4] Business plan 97/98

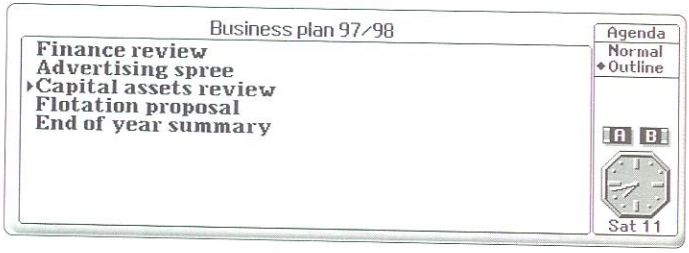
Keeping up-to-date

As the time comes to release the next version of the software program it's a simple matter to read off and delete the crossed-out entries in a list, putting the basics of their content into the software documentation as changes since the previous release. In a more general project environment, these completed items might form the basis of a progress report to a customer, etc.



Using an AGENDA memo to store more details of your project

Jumping into outline mode to view your main summary items

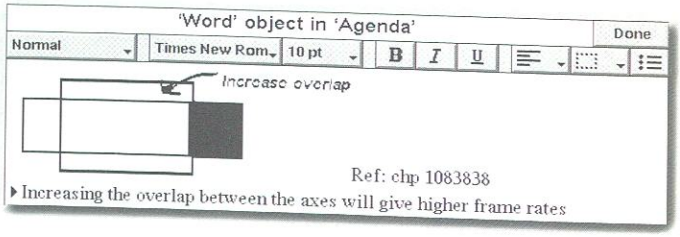


style A). Detail and notes for the sub-tasks are then filled in using the default Body text style. This is not just to make the text look more attractive—the clever bit comes by pressing the diamond key and viewing the document in 'outline' mode. In this fashion you can collapse and explode your project item notes as needed. As items are completed you can either put an 'x' next to the text, or perhaps change the font to 'Bold' so that its status is easily recognisable.

...And on a Series 5

Although their machines don't have this outlining facility, Series 5 owners shouldn't feel too left out, as there are options you can avail yourself of which are not present on the '3' series. For example, each project entry could simultaneously have a WORD document, a SKETCH and a voice notes file, all attached and ready for editing via a shortcut key or a tap or two of the screen. And if three embedded objects is not enough for enhancing an entry,

Inserting objects with a Series 5



note that by inserting objects within the WORD object itself, you can have any number of spreadsheets, sketches, graphs and so forth, all intimately attached to the original project heading!

This flexibility between the core built-in applications opens up all sorts of possible uses and renders many a third party application largely redundant.

Although the AGENDA approach to project management doesn't allow the sort of graphical overview and task-linking that you'd get in a dedicated package, it's still possible to get a feel for a project's progress by simply scanning the task list and noting the number of entries uncompleted, together with their priorities. One advantage AGENDA has over a dedicated program is that all the alarm-scheduling and time-allocation functions you need to organise yourself and your staff are all built-in and ready for immediate use. And of course it's free, doesn't need installing and (hopefully by now) you already know how to use it!

Thanks to David Coons, who gave me the initial idea for this article.

FOR SALE

Series 3a 512K-£100, leather executive case-£10, 256 flash SSD-£25, Widget desk stand-£10, mains adaptor-£5, RCOM, PsiWin and cable (soap on a rope)-£40. All manuals included. All in good condition.

Contact: Rick on 01438 361470
e-mail: ohlendorf@onyxnet.co.uk

Purchased new March 1997, mint condition 2MB Series 3c (boxed) with mains lead-£190, plus 3c PsiWin-£40, Covertec closed case-£17, 1MB Flash SSD-£50, Purple 3a Chess-£15, Microsoft AutoRoute-£35, Widget Timebase-£20, Financial Calculator-£15, Berlitz Phrase Book-£20.

Buy everything together for a bargain £350.

Contact: Martin Urch on 0836 781195
e-mail: Martin_Urch@CompuServe.com

Scrabble, packaged as new for £30, also three 128K Flash SSDs at £18 each.

Contact: 01383-416688 (evenings)
e-mail: mino.manekshaw@mcmail.com

WANTED

PCMCIA Adaptor for the PSION 3c or Series 5 as well as a PCMCIA Modem (28.8kbs minimum)

Contact: 01383-416688(evenings)

e:mail: mino.manekshaw@mcmail.com

FOR SALE

Psion Travel Modem for Series 3c-£125, Psimail Internet Software-£30. Both items boxed and as new.

Contact: Neil Dickens on 0181 707 0758 after 6pm.

Series 3a 2MB complete with black leather case and 128K SSD in good condition-£100, Cyclone 3.5" floppy disc drive complete with File Manager software-£70, Agenda Link 97 software-£35, Psiwin for 3a complete with all cables and early MCLink software disk-£35, Dataview Software on SSD (not pro version)-£20, Parallel link, Black desk stand and mains adapter-£30. All hardware and software complete with manuals, most are in original packaging and all in very clean/tidy condition. Will accept £270 for the lot. Delivery can be arranged.

Contact : 01442 241070 (after 6 pm)
Fax : 01923 264058 (during office hours)
Email : peter.austin@virgin.net

512K 3a in immaculate condition with leather case, 512K flash SSD, Spellchecker on SSD, Widget Quick Reference guide, all with original boxes and manuals. Sensible offers please.

Contact: Rod Lines: 01707 888423
e-mail: RodLines@compuserve.com

Purple Software 3a Chess for Series 3a/3c on SSD-£15 (DM 45), Psion Monopoly for Series 3a/3c on 3,5" Disk-£15 (DM 45), Purple Software DrawIt Deluxe for Series 3/3a/3c on SSD-£30 (DM 90), Pocket & Soul DataDeLuxe 2.5 for Series 3/3a/3c on 128KB Flash-SSD (original)-£25 (DM 75). Buy all 4 software packages for only £65 (DM 200) all software in good condition incl. manuals and postage and packing.

Contact: Sebastian Hochstetter, Turmstrasse 10, D-63526 Erlensee, Germany

e-mail: PsiSoft@compuserve.com

Canon BJ-10sx bubblejet printer, virtually new, cost £200—a gift at £80.

Contact: Malcolm Prever - 01279 437740
e-mail: mprever@netcomuk.co.uk

Psion Series 3a (2MB), PsiWin and link cable, parallel printer interface, mains power adaptor, leather case, Autoroute Express, Professional Finance, Money, DataView, 256K flash SSD, boxed and with manuals where applicable-£350 ono.

Contact: Mr S Pitt - 01452 421083 (after 6pm)

Series 3a (2MB)—as new-£150, Paint and Compose-£25, Text Assistant-£40, Personal Accounts and Expenses-£15, 2MB flash SSD-£120, 4MB flash SSD-£160, 8MB flash SSD-£200, Cyclone drive-£100, leather case-£10.

Contact: Jim - 0171 2780361

8MB flash SSD-£300, 4MB flash SSD-£180

Contact: Damien Bryan - 01933 383826 (weekends)

WANTED

'Machine Code Programming on the Psion Series 3 and 3a', by John Farrant (Kuma Books).

Contact: Les Hollingbery - 01628 823322 (after 6pm)

Programmers' Workshop

by Leigh Edwards

In this issue I'll conclude the review of the many options available to Psion programmers and take a look at the technical support available from Psion.

Following on from the last issue, here are the remaining options for programmers:

OPL32

An OPL32 SDK is available from Psion for commercial developers, or anyone who wants a PC-hosted development environment.

The OPL32 SDK includes:

- The PC based WINS emulation of the Psion Series 5 in several configurations.
- Tools (for resource file compilation, bitmap and font manipulation, etc.)
- Examples not found on EPOC32 machines.
- Documentation, in HTML and RTF formats.

The OPL32 SDK requires a PC running Windows 95, Windows NT 3.51 or Windows NT 4.0 with 25MB of free disk space.

Calls to the operating system are not available directly in OPL32. An OPX must be used to replace any essential O/S calls. Five OPXs are supplied with the Series 5, providing extra functions for System, Database, Date/Time, Graphics and Printing. An additional OPX called Sysram1 has recently been released by Psion (It is available from http://3lib.ukonline.co.uk/find/sysram1.zip). Sysram1 provides a few additional functions missing from the 'standard' set and provides replacements for two bugged OPL32 database functions: FIND and FINDFIELD. The Psion C++ SDK is needed to develop new OPXs.

OVAL

OVAL is ideal for: those with previous programming experience of Visual BASIC, for portability of code from the Series 3c to Visual BASIC on a PC and vice versa, speed and ease of development, if the project involves Series 3c to PC data transfers, or if multiple events have to be handled.

Developing in OVAL is done in a Windows-based Integrated Development Environment. It features an intelligent source code editor, code translators and over 30 application controls.

To run OVAL applications the run-time interpreter has to be present in ROM (Read Only Memory), currently limited to the Psion 3c and later versions of the Workabout.

Version 1.1 of OVAL is due out before the end of 1997, and is designed to address some problems with version 1.0 of the OVAL interpreter and run-time components.

The OVAL run-time system is not available in the first Series 5 systems, although this is likely to be remedied during 1998 in the form of OVAL32.

BCC

A Linux or DOS hosted freeware C (K&R) compiler that generates executables for 16-bit Psion machines. It is a workable system, but it is far from being finished. The main sources are:

http://www.gumbley.demon.co.uk

http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/9577/

Macros

Macros are useful for automating repetitive tasks and applications. Three options for Macro-based automation currently exist for 16-bit systems, and one for 32-bit:

MACSYS

A Macro system that allows automation of most common Psion tasks. It can record and play back a sequence of keystrokes.

KMAC

Is a keystroke Macro record and playback system written in C, with all necessary executable files and full OPL and C source files included.

ATS based macros

Starting with the Series 3a, the ATS (Automatic Test System) was introduced to assist with automated testing of HWIM C applications. An example ATS-based Macro recording and playback system is provided with the Psion C SDK.

SwitchTask

This is brand new hotkey and macro system for the Series 5 written by Pascal

Nicolas, and allows a multitude of clever functions.

Psion programmers' support

Psion Software's developer support is focused through their *EPOC World* WWW site and newsgroups. Currently it is oriented mainly towards 32-bit content, though this will change in the future.

Public access

A limited number of the EPOC World web pages are available for public access, in particular those that outline the purpose of EPOC World, detail the types of available subscription and describe the services provided. Other generally available pages provide on-line information, documentation for downloading, SDK updates and some additional tools useful to programmers, such as the Series 5 bitmap conversion utility BMCONV.EXE.

Subscribing to EPOC World

Currently there are two types of subscription, both of which are only really applicable to Series 5 development:

- C++ Developer at £200 per annum.
- OPL Developer at £75 per annum.

Unfortunately a combined subscription to both C++ and OPL is not available. A subscription gets you the appropriate SDK on CD-ROM, plus access (via a user name and password) to the 'member only' areas of the web site and newsgroups. An annual subscription is exactly that: it provides access to the on-line services and one major SDK update per year. You can subscribe through the following routes:

EPOC World Website:
http://www.software.psion.com/EPOCWorld/

Write to:
EPOC World
19 Harcourt Street
London W1H 1DT

Telephone: *0171 2081944*

E-mail: *ew_subs@psion.com*

Members only

So what's behind the mystery door and is it worth it? A subscription is essential for C++ programmers and for those who require a PC-based development environment for the Series 5. If you're developing applications for use by others and wondering whether to subscribe, then I would say an unqualified yes. For hobbyist programmers a subscription will depend on many personal considerations—not the least of which is cost.

In comparison to the 16-bit SDKs, the 32-bit SDKs are far from fully developed, but since the C++ SDK was origi-

nally planned for the end of 1997 then it's perhaps not surprising. What I still find hard to comprehend is the idea of only making fully functional SDKs available well after the launch of a new machine. In Psion's defence, all of their resources are currently at full stretch and new information is being released regularly via EPOC World, hence a subscription is essential for serious programmers.

Apart from getting an SDK, there are two main benefits from a subscription. You get the latest information, software updates and beta releases, plus additional documentation from the web pages. Secondly, the Psion specific EPOC World newsgroups provide a 'protected' environment inhabited by serious developers, including Psion's own development staff. Within the newsgroup discussions the ratio of wheat to chaff is high. The web pages and newsgroups are split into subsections for C++, OPL32, OPXs, OPL16 (very quiet in there), general issues plus others on specific special features.

Currently there are fourteen Psion newsgroups, some of which are fairly active, but others have seen little if any activity as yet. Subscribers tend to help each other, and many comments/answers come from Psion staff, but some of the more difficult questions may go unanswered—particularly when they correspond to gaps in the SDK documentation.

Future developments

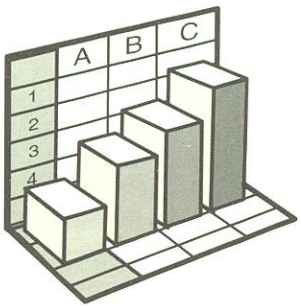
Work on the development of the 32-bit SDKs by Psion Software will soon culminate in the release of version 2 of the C++ SDK (due for release in January 98). In addition you can look forward to the release of an improved Series 5 and Geofox 1 simulator (WINS), better documentation with search facilities and the introduction of new programming tools, e.g. for the production of program help.

I understand that the Psion SDK CD-ROMs will eventually include all of the 16-bit development tools and documentation as well. Hence, an OPL or C/C++ subscription should provide everything you need for 16/32-bit programming in your chosen language, although no information is available about when this will happen.

See the 'Psion Reference' and the Software Directory towards the end of the magazine for sources of the shareware and freeware mentioned above.

The information in this article was taken from my new book 'Programming Psion Computers', see the review on page 50 or the advertisement on page 114 for further details.

Working with SHEET



A series aimed at the relative beginner to the Psion's built-in programs—here's the fourth part of our tutorial designed primarily for 3a/3c/Siena users

by Steve Clack

Following on from last issue, we'll now take the block of numbers we entered and formatted as currency, and perform a simple calculation on them.

Spreadsheets are capable of performing some pretty elaborate calculations on the data you enter, but it's a fact that the vast majority of spreadsheet users barely do more than add up columns of numbers. Using a spreadsheet in this way is perfectly reasonable, especially as it neatly totals any number of figures in a fraction of a second—far more efficient than sitting with a calculator and adding the numbers one-by-one.

Doing sums

In order to perform any kind of calculation in a spreadsheet cell you are first required to enter a '=' symbol as the first character. The exception to this is in cases where you simply want to perform an arithmetic function (add, subtract, multiply, divide, powers, etc.) and display the result directly in a cell. If, for instance, you want to add 12 and 81 together and display the answer, you can just enter '12+81' (without the quotation marks) and press the <Enter> key. This will instantly display the result (93) in that cell, but will leave behind no record of the sums you did in order to arrive at that number. For that reason alone this method of entering calcula-

tions is of limited use, as part of the beauty of a well executed spreadsheet is that it's easy to see how you arrived at all your answers.

By entering the above calculation with a '=' in front, i.e. '=12+81', you will of course arrive at the same solution inside the cell, but the underlying calculation (the fact that the answer was arrived at by adding together 12 and 81) will always appear in the formula bar at the top of the screen. If you find that you want to change the '81' to an '82' at a later stage, just move to that cell, press the <Enter> key to go into edit mode, and use the arrow keys to highlight the number '2' and replace it with a '1'.

The '=' symbol simply tells SHEET that the current cell will be used to store and display the result of a calculation. The calculation can take many forms, and as always with spreadsheets you can enter *cell references* in place of actual numbers. This means that instead of entering '=12+81' you can enter '=A1+B1', then enter '12' into cell 'A1', and '81' into 'B1'. You can then type headings into adjacent cells to say what the numbers 12 and 81 represent, and whenever you want to change the numbers you can just type them directly into each cell and the total will instantly change accordingly. Again, this is the kind of flexibility that makes SHEET so much more powerful and flexible than a simple calculator.

Creating a total

As a useful example of calculations we'll add up a series of numbers from the spreadsheet we created in the last instalment. We'll take all the numbers in the cells from 'C2' to 'C13' and add them together, displaying the total at the bottom of the list.

The wrong way

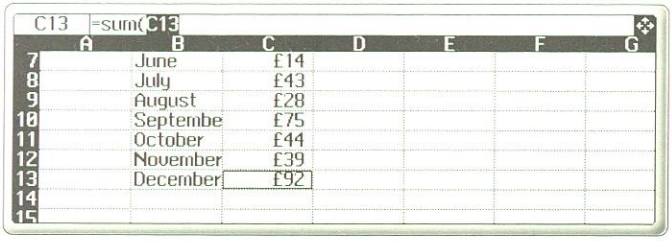
A common mistake amongst spreadsheet novices who see a column of numbers to be totalled is to just add each one together separately, like this:

'=A1+A2+A3+A4+A5...'

The right way

Whereas this is mathematically correct and provides the right answer, there is (thankfully) a much faster way. This is to use the 'SUM' function, and to simply tell it the *range* of numbers that it must add up. In order to add everything between 'C2' and 'C13' you must enter '=SUM(C2:C13)'. The '=SUM' tells SHEET to add together all the numbers in the *range* that follows. '(C2:C13)' represents that range, and in every case where a spreadsheet *function* (like 'SUM') is used, this part (known as the *arguments*) must be enclosed in brackets to tell the *function* that they're what it has to perform its calculations on.

The colon ':' between the 'C2' and 'C13' tells the 'SUM' function to take *all* of the numbers from 'C2' to 'C13',



Selecting a range by pressing <Shift> <Spacebar>. See the little symbol top left

inclusive, and tot them all up. You can use this notation to perform a calculation on any block of numbers. It even works on multiple columns or rows, so you could enter '=SUM(C2:D3) to add together all the cells C2, C3, ,D2, D3.

And the efficient way...

When applying a calculation such as 'SUM' to a lot of numbers, you first need to work out which cells you wish it to apply to. This can be quite tedious and may even require you to jot down the cell references before entering the calculation. There is of course an easier way, and that is to highlight the required cell range as you go. Here's the procedure:

1. First, move to cell 'C14' in our example spreadsheet, which is the blank one directly below the 12 numbers you entered last time.

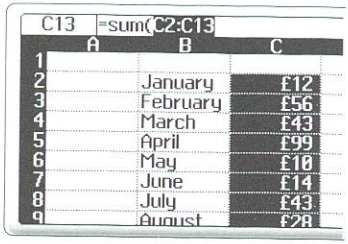
2. Enter '=sum('. Although functions such as 'SUM' always appear in upper case (capital) letters there's no need for you to *enter* them in this way. SHEET will automatically convert them to capitals when you finally press the <Enter> key at the end of the calculation, and the fact that it changes them to upper case letters confirms that SHEET has recognised the word as a valid spreadsheet function.

3. The next step is to select the range of cells you wish to add. Press <Shift><Spacebar> to go into SHEET's special 'edit range' mode. A four-headed arrow symbol will appear as shown in the screen shot above, to indicate that you can now use the arrow keys to select your range of cells to be SUMmed.

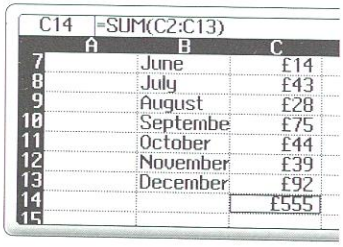
4. Press the up arrow key once to move the highlight to the last number at the bottom of your column (see screen shot above). The formula bar at the top of the screen will then highlight the number 'C13', to show that it is currently selected.

5. Press and *hold down* the <Shift> key, and at the same time press the up arrow key until 'C2:C13' is highlighted (see top of next page). Don't worry if you go too far up, just press the down arrow key again (with the <Shift> key still pressed), until the correct range is selected.

6. Now your highlight has encompassed all the numbers to be



totalled, press ')' to close those all-important brackets (parentheses), and finally press the <Enter> key. The cursor will immediately jump to the totals cell (C14), and display the total (see screen shot below).



Note that in the last instalment we formatted all cells from 'C1' to 'C100' as currency, so the '£' sign (or the symbol for the currency you use in your own country) should appear automatically.

You have now successfully totalled a column of numbers, by far the most common calculation performed by spreadsheet users. The principle works the same for any group of numbers to be totalled, and in all cases you can either select the cells to be totalled by using the <Shift><Spacebar> technique, or you can type in the range names manually, remembering to put a colon between the two cell references. Always be sure that these two cell references refer to the top-leftmost and bottom rightmost number of your range, and you will always get the correct result.

Spreadsheet operators

Before going further into spreadsheet calculations it's important to note that just as with the built-in calculator, SHEET on the Psion uses some slightly different symbols to the average calculator when performing mathematical functions. The symbol for addition is '+' and for subtraction is '-' (don't confuse it with '_', which is actually an underline character). The multiplication and division symbols (known as *operators*) may be a little less instantly recognisable: the '*' symbol is used to represent the multiplication symbol (x), and '/' represents the division symbol (÷).

If you plan to use *powers* in your calculations then note that the correct operator is '**', therefore '3^2' is represented by '3**2' and so on. For more complex calculations you should consult the Psion User Manual, and SHEET comes with many dozens of mathematical functions covering everything from algebra to statistics. The basic principle of starting each calculation with a '=' follows throughout, and the numbers you wish to operate on should always be enclosed in brackets, even if they contain a single figure or cell reference.

In the next issue we'll plot some graphs to illustrate the visual power of graphical data on your Psion.

"On The Net"

The latest gossip from Psion's online community

Pete Sipple lends an ear to what's being said on the Internet's Psion chat areas. In this issue, we look into the stylus problem, Psion's unwanted appearance on the BBC, and backups...

Now is the Winter of our discontent. Anyone who regularly backs up using PsiWin v2.0 may have found an interesting little problem. An upgrade, v2.01, is available from Psion's website, but it's a *14 Megabyte* download...

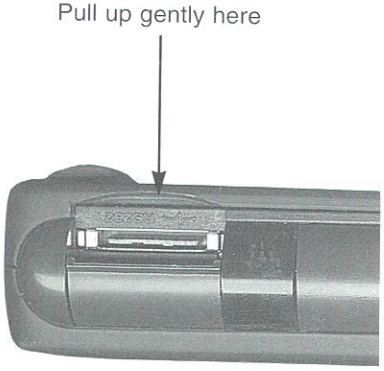
"Forget the millennium bug. PsiWin 2 has its own built-in bug which is here and now! And it will bite you every time the clocks change. Since the weekend my backup process, which has previously worked a treat, has gone haywire. The software kept telling me that all files on the PC were newer than the ones on the Psion and did I want to back up anyway. I was confused. The whole process was taking me 12 minutes a time and lots of mouse clicking, instead of the usual few minutes at most. I tried to ring Psion tech support. I finally got through on Friday afternoon after a week of trying. They said they've been inundated with callers having the same problem. It's something to do with the clock going back. The clock on my PC was changed thanks to Windows 95. It seems that this threw PsiWin into a funk. Their advice: delete my backup files and start again from scratch and "you won't have this problem again". Yes, but what about next Spring and next Winter? Come on Psion—get this bug fixed!" *(100326.241@compuserve.com)*

"Let's get things in perspective. There's a bug in PsiWin, which cropped up with the change from summer to winter time. PsiWin is simply confused by the clock moving back one hour, thinking that the files on your PC are newer. And it politely asks what it should do. Will the same bug crop up when we go to summertime again? Possible, but unlikely as the clock is moved forward one hour. Making the files on your PC 'older' than they were already. It looks that Psion will have one year to fix this bug. Ample time to put a revision on their web site. As they've already done with the 2.01 upgrade." *(100726.3155@compuserve.com)*

I'm using the original PsiWin 2 and the 'newer files' bug bit me today. A bit of head scratching and lots more mouse clicks finally got me backed up, but if it's a choice between a few extra clicks or a 14MB download, I'll keep on clicking." *(75162.167@compuserve.com)*

Stuck Stylus—Last time around, we looked at this new affliction noted by Series 5 users. One user, Erik Johansen has found the cure.

"I know that a month or so ago there were a lot of messages about the stylus release mechanism getting jammed. At the time mine was working perfectly so I didn't take much notice (silly me), but now it's failed. The spring mechanism has gone, and you can push the stylus in and it sits 4 or 5mm deeper than it used to. To remove it I need to open the expansion port slot and push it out. Are there any DIY fixes for this?" *(tennant@theforge.demon.co.uk)*



"This is the way it worked for me in less than 10 seconds. Turn your Psion upside down with the battery end facing you, put your finger into the RS232 opening and gently pull the bottom out till you hear the latch mechanism click back into place." *(ej@it.dtu.dk)*

"Excellent. Well done, mine has been playing up for ages." *(pseward@cix.co.uk)*

"Yep—works for me too—my stylus was not popping out properly, and the fix didn't work at first, but then I dropped my 5 and the pen mechanism totally seized up—doing the above then worked and it's as good as new now." *(rupert.voelcker@bt-sys.bt.co.uk)*

On the subject of styli, are they fragile enough to count as consumables?

"Earlier today I called Psion UK Customer Support to request another stylus to replace the one that broke yesterday (my second breakage in six weeks). Whilst happy to send me a 'complementary stylus', the Psion chap said that I should consider the stylus as "the nearest to a consumable that the Psion has" and should think about buying their packs of replacement styli (you know—the ones that none of the shops have in stock!) I think they should consider making a stylus that doesn't break and mailing one out free to all Psion 5 owners." *(dave.cross@gb.swiss-bank.com)*

"I've had my S5 for three months and have yet to break my stylus. Short of dropping it on the floor and running the office chair over it a few times, I'm not sure how that might happen (though apparently it does). Losing the stylus seems far more likely—I leave mine all over the place—and the most unbreakable stylus in the world is still going to go missing sooner or later. So in that sense I suppose they are 'consumables'." *(ifzf327X@utxsvs.cc.utexas.edu)*

"My pen's tip broke off as I tapped the screen with it. It seemed that it had been fractured by the mechanism inside the machine. After a call to Psion a replacement arrived a couple of weeks later, but won't fit in the machine—it seems the whole mechanism's given up." *(mark.newman@bbc.co.uk)*

"I guess that Dave actually meant that the tip broke off. This morning my stylus dropped out of the S5 with the tip broken off. The marks on the broken end suggest that it is the locking mechanism that bites the tip off. I assume you will have less chance of breaking the stylus by sitting on it then by putting it in the S5. I tried contacting Psion on their number for 'complete customer satisfaction', but I didn't get further than a voice mail. Talking about satisfaction... *(fste@tinac.com)*

Psion recently received some less than welcome publicity on the BBC's Watchdog program back in November, following consumer complaints about the bugs in the Series 5's early 1.00 ROM...

"I haven't seen Watchdog, but can anybody who saw it tell me in general what they thought about it, and what the reaction of Psion was." *(claudius@bigfoot.com)*

"Well, it looks like Psion got off lightly"

"I thought it was a pretty poor article. There were a couple of people with genuine grievances (e.g. a journalist who had to print 300 pages to get the one printed page he really wanted), but not the vast amount of complaints we have seen in the newsgroups. Psion seemed to be completely absent from the discussion—no spokesperson, as Watchdog often have from a company they are attacking, but only a statement that they would fix early Psions free of charge." *(dhawthorne@cix.co.uk)*

"Well, looks like Psion got off lightly... no mention of the persistent hardware problems." *(niwright@cix.co.uk)*

"It looks like the only way to get Psion to do the right thing is to get them featured on TV! Mind you, it seems you still need to send it away for a couple of weeks..." *(zebraman@cix.co.uk)*

"The one thing I find sad about the whole situation is that all the comments across the Internet and in the computer press over the last few months has amounted to nothing, and yet a 5 minute slot on the TV results in "here's a freephone number for you to get a free upgrade to version 1.01"—if, indeed that's what it is. I tried dialling the number for about an hour after the show and got a constant engaged tone, then when it did start ringing, nobody answered! I guess some things never change." *(mayeva@cix.co.uk)*

"After watching yesterday's Watchdog programme I phoned the freephone number this morning and was offered a courier collection next week. Turns out that I only live 20 minutes from the contractor where the swap is being made and thus I popped in this afternoon and now am the proud owner of a ROM V1.01. Well done Psion—it's a shame though that it took the might of the BBC to achieve this miracle of what should be normal service." *(tom@rherman.demon.co.uk)*

And finally... Nostalgia ain't what it used to be...

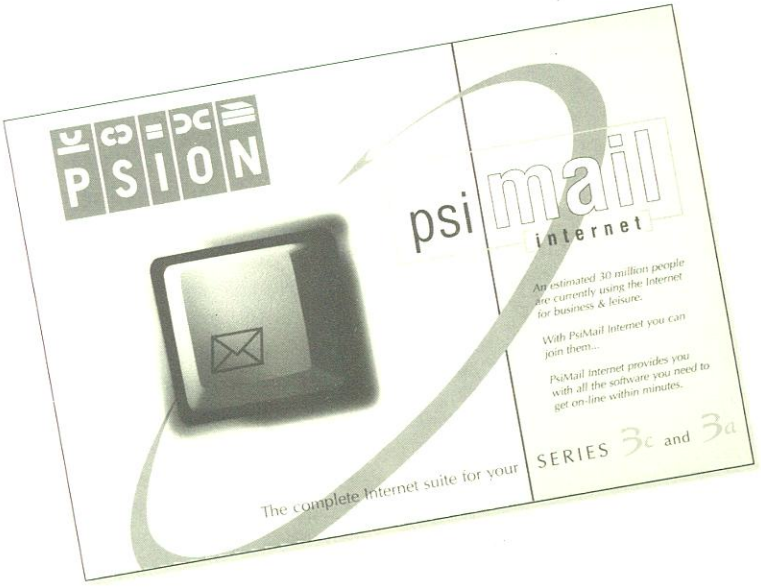
"I bought my first PC about 10 years ago after graduating from a Sinclair ZX Spectrum. The PC was a 286-12 with 1MB of RAM and I remember paying extra to upgrade to the 40MB hard disk from the standard 20MB. Now with my S5 and 32MB CF I've got a 486 equivalent with 40MB of memory, a sophisticated 32-bit OS which is capable of emulating my old Spectrum, fits (almost) in my pocket and runs off AA batteries. Isn't it amazing that we've come so far in such a short time? I wonder where we'll be 10 years from now with our Psion Series 8? I'd predict a credit card thickness machine with multiple RISC processors (whatever did happen to the Transputer?) running at obscene speeds, with a true colour display, voice and handwriting recognition, huge amounts of memory, running for several months from a watch battery. And some enterprising software company will provide an emulator to run those quaint old PC games with 3dfx acceleration. Well I can dream!" *(mbriody@cix.co.uk)*

Psion related discussions take place in several Usenet newsgroups including comp.sys.psion.misc, as well as the Psion conference on CiX, the Psion area on AOL, and the Psion forum on CompuServe.

Pete Sipple

WIN a copy of PsiMail Internet!

Just answer the following questions relating to the contents of this issue, and mail your answers to the usual *Palmtop* address. One correct entry picked out at random on 20th January will receive the prize. If you don 't want PsiMail Internet then you can choose another prize of equivalent valu


PSION
psi mail
internet
An estimated 30 million people are currently using the Internet for business & leisure.
With PsiMail Internet you can join them...
PsiMail Internet provides you with all the software you need to get on-line within minutes.
The complete Internet suite for your
SERIES 3c and 3a

Question 1 - How many megabytes of RAM do you get in a Geofox One?

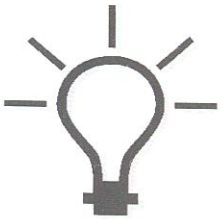
Question 2 - What BBC TV program did the Series 5 recently appear on?

Question 3 - What is the name of Psion's latest programmers' forum?

Last issue 's competition winner was Kenneth Gear of Penrith, Cumbria

The competition answers were: 17 countries, 40000, and Pac-Man

Hints & Tips



Every item published in this section wins a FREE *Palmtop* tee shirt!

Entering times in SHEET

Having seen the 'Flying Psions' article in the last issue of *Palmtop* I thought that pilot readers may like some more information on setting up a logbook spreadsheet. When I bought my Series 3a this was the first specialist file I wanted to set up. Being a novice with computers I eventually managed to set up the basics of a logbook but needed more expert help to create columns for adding hours and minutes. Fortunately someone explained to me how to do this using the 'INT' function. The principle is to convert hours and minutes to decimal hours using the formula:

'=INT(cell)+(cell-INT(cell))/.6'

where 'cell' is substituted with the cell reference of the time you wish to convert to decimal format. You can then enter a time in the cell referenced by the formula, separating hours and minutes with a decimal point.

e.g. Enter a time of 6 hours and 15 minutes as '6.15'. The formula above will then convert this to '6.25'—or six and a quarter hours, the correct decimal equivalent. Similarly, '6.30' would evaluate to '6.5', or six and a half hours.

You can then carry out the calculations in hidden columns and convert back to hours and minutes using this formula in the totals columns:

'INT(cell)+(cell-INT(cell))*.6

A personalised logbook can then be produced without resorting to purchasing a commercial equivalent. It is worth leaving the file open between entries as it can take a long time for it to recalculate on opening. As this is an important file backing up is obviously essential. Unfortunately backing up closes the file, so patience is required on re-opening the logbook afterwards. To provide a hard copy, I print it out once a year and then start a new logbook file.

Nigel Charles
Etchilhampton, Wiltshire

Psions as a rule—reprise

Following from the tip given in issue 14 regarding the use of a Series 3a/3c

screen as a makeshift 'ruler', here is a solution to make it more accurate. Just alternate a colon and semicolon at every fifth position instead of a '.' like thus:

|....:....|....;....|....:....|....;....|....:....|....;....|

Gerd-Peter Meier
Berlin, Germany

Printing year planners

There's no way to print a nice neat year planner directly from the year view of the 3a/3c spreadsheet, but you can get around this if you have a graphics program for your Psion that will print out Psion 'PIC' files. Just go to the year planner in your AGENDA and press the <Psion><Shift><Control><S> keys together. This is the standard method used to create all 3a/3c/Siena screen shots, and will dump a file called SCREEN.PIC into the top level directory of your Psion's internal memory. You can then use your graphics software to print out the image. Some packages will even allow you to enlarge the image before printing, and if you have a PC then you can export the 'PIC' file to that and perform the conversion and printing directly on the PC.

This technique also works with SHEET graphs, which can't otherwise be printed directly from the 3a/3c.

Gareth Walsh
Beckenham, Kent

Advanced deletions

Everyone knows that in WORD on the Series 3a/3c pressing the <Delete> key backspaces to delete the character immediately to the left of the cursor. Not everyone knows that pressing <Shift><Delete> will gobble up characters to the right of the cursor, just like the <Del> key on a PC.

Getting a little more advanced, if you use the <Shift> and arrow keys to highlight any block of text in WORD, a press of the <Delete> key will always delete everything that was highlighted. Pressing <Psion><Delete> removes everything from the current cursor position to the beginning of the current line, and <Shift><Psion><Delete> removes

New from next issue!

Q & A

From the next issue we will be incorporating a new question and answer section into our hints and tips pages.

If you have a burning question concerning the operation of your Psion computer then please send it in to us—every question published will win a free Palmtop tee shirt!

Also, don't forget that every hint and tip published wins a free tee shirt too!

everything from the current cursor position to the end of the current line.

All these keystrokes apart from <Shift><Delete> will put the deleted text into the clipboard, so pressing <Psion><I> will restore the erased text if you make a mistake.

On a Series 5, only <Delete> and <Shift><Delete> work from the above commands, and none of the deleted text gets put into the clipboard.

Yves Bard
Paris, France

Flexible DATA

When searching for information in DATA, don't forget that you can hunt for *any* text or numbers within your entries. If you are looking for an address entry and can't remember the person's name, just type a few letters from something you *can* remember, like part of their telephone number, the town they live in, or any personal notes you may have attached to their database entry.

Because DATA works in this free-form fashion there's really no point in sorting your entries into alphabetical order. Everything works just as well if left in the unsorted order that you entered your database records.

Janet Owen
Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

Poor Series 5 manual?

The Series 5 User Guide is really quite slim for such a sophisticated computer and completely misses many of the more advanced functions of the machine. Most of the information you are likely to need is available from the Series 5's extensive online help system built in. If you find yourself frequently referring to certain sections you can always print out hard copies of this information.

Dave Barnes
Dublin, Eire

Menu magic

On all 3a/3c, Siena and Series 5 machines you can jump between menus using the number keys as well as the left and right arrows. If you press the <Menu> key to bring up the menu bar, pressing '2' will jump to the the second menu from the left, '3' will jump to the third menu, etc.

Also, once the menus are open there's no need to press the <Psion> key with the hotkey letters if you are using a 3a/3c—just pressing the letter key for the shortcut will take you directly to the menu selection, you then have to press the <Enter> key to execute the command.

Donald Booker
Chelmsford, Essex

FOR SALE

Psion 2MB Series 3a, loaded with PsiMail Internet, Notepad Deluxe, JBData and many more, plus warranty-£250, also Purple Software Cyclone disk drive-£100 (some warranty left), 3Link cable and software-£40, parallel link-£20, Berlitz Interpreter SSD-£20, 128K flash SSD-£20. Buy the lot for £400.

Contact: Justinian Date - 0171 652 8552
or 0181 758 5485 (1-4pm)

Acorn Pocket Book (256K) with A-link and software for connecting to Acorn Archimedes computers. Will swap for any useful Psion 3c accessories (flash SSDs, etc.)

Conact: Mick Reeves - 01757 638643

2MB Series 3a with mains adaptor, 2MB flash SSD, DataView Pro, Psion Money, Notepad Deluxe, Autoroute Express, Chess, File Manager, leather case - £350 the lot.

Contact: Joe Swift - 0161 455 8228

Organiser 2 collection: LZ64 (2), XP32 (2), leather cases (2), mains adaptors (2), printer, formatter, comms link, all instruction manuals, both books by Mike Shaw, Datapacks - 128K (1), 64K (6), 32K (1), 16K (7), 8K (3). No reasonable offer refused for all or part.

Contact: John Cameron - 0141 357 2516 (evenings)

Cyclone drive for Series 3c, 3c Travel Modem, PsiMail Internet (on floppy disk and SSD), everything for £200. All boxed, six months old and complete with manuals.

Contact: Richard Osborne - 0181 392 1983
e-mail: jkro@btinternet.com

Psion Siena (1MB)-£129, Siena leather case-£10, 256K Series 3-£70, Series 3 leather case-£10, PsiWin 1.0 (for 3/3a)-£20, 1MB flash SSD-£90, 2MB flash SSD-£140, 1MB RAM SSD-£130, Psion Money on SSD-£20, Accounts and Expenses on SSD-£20, Berlitz Phrase Book-£20, Games 2 SSD-£15, Monopoly on disk-£15, Purple Chess for Siena on disk-£15 (with manuals).

Contact: Nick Douglas - 01232 763529

Psion Series 3a (256K), AC adaptor, desk stand, deluxe leather case, PC link software and cable, printer cable, 128K flash SSD, games SSD, all manuals and 12 back issues of Palmtop, all for only £100.

Contact: 01778 341600
e-mail: levinceoww@aol.com

Psion Organiser 2 (LZ64) with manuals and mains adaptor, leather case, Finance Packs 1 and 2, 32K RAMpack, 2x32K Datapacks, 128K Datapack and 3 books. All in original boxes for £110.

Contact: Tim - 01225 763070

Series 3a (2MB)-£150, 2x2MB flash SSD-£150 each, 2x4MB flash SSD-£175 each, 1MB RAM SSD-£175, Personal Accounts and Expenses-£30, Series 3 Toolkit-£25, DataView-£35, Serial link-£30, Parallel link-£15, mains adaptor-£7, 3Fax modem-£150, PsiWin-£40, Widget 3a Quick Reference Guide-£15, 'Introduction to using 3a' book-£7, '100 most frequently asked questions...' book-£5. Alternatively, buy everything for £1400. Items in like-new condition with manuals, boxes, etc.

Contact: Roger Lawson - 0171 262 7994 (day)
or 0378 026333 (anytime)

WANTED

Travel modem for 3c, PsiMail Internet - boxed if possible.

Contact: Glenn Roberts - 07050 603 469

Murgan's Musings

Stephen Murgan joins the mile-high-Psion club, and brings us news from the western front...

As a Psion user of more than four years vintage, I can safely say that while I may not have seen it *all*, I have probably seen much of it. And so, I present to you some of my recollections from down the years...

The pocket-sized wonder

While each of us have a pet feature that we would like to see on a future Psion—mine is 'hotlinks' between documents, spreadsheets and AGENDA items—it must be said that in terms of usability, with the Series 3a/3c Psion have produced a winner. The casing is a masterpiece of tesselation and the functionality is excellent. Being able to compose a quick note to someone while you are standing in a queue at the bank, then upload it to your desktop computer and zap it off to a friend on the other side of the world via the Internet is a major time saver. (Yes, you can do it directly from the Psion, but I am of the opinion that this feature is not yet reliable or cost-effective enough for mass-market use). So used to the Psion way of doing things have I become that I've largely forgotten how to use a pen.

Psion in the air

One area where a Psion Series 3 scores heavily over a laptop is when travelling by air. Airports and airlines, rightly or wrongly, have a tendency to pick on laptop users, particularly if you are making an international flight. Some of the more zealous security staff have a tendency to assume that a laptop is packed with explosives or drugs and act accordingly. Some even weigh them, check the weights against their tables, and if they don't like the look of you or have too much time on their hands, they may even ask you to take it to bits!

With a Psion it's a little bit different, as the diminutive size makes it rather diffi-

cult to conceal anything significant within. However, the use of a 3a as both a smuggling device and a bomb detonator in a recent film has made some airport personnel slightly paranoid about the 3a. Simply popping it through the X-ray machine (I have never had a problem here) is usually enough to allay their fears, though they often ask you to verify that it works by actually switching it on. This can sometimes backfire—once I was bringing a dead one home for repairs, and they put it through the machine four times! On another occasion one of those nice chaps at London's Heathrow airport very politely asked what it was, as he had seen so many of them. I, of course, was pleased to spread the gospel, and left him suitably impressed.

Once in the air, it doesn't get any easier for the laptop user. RF (Radio Frequency) interference means that the use of all electronic gadgets, including portable CDs, cellphones etc. are *verboten* during take-off and landing. In my experience, cabin staff are more tolerant of handheld devices than they are of laptops. Whether that is because they perceive the 3a as less of a threat to the avionics or because they think that it is a games machine I cannot say. Either way, there's no harm in leaving it off for those crucial few minutes, which I usually do, just to be on the safe side.

Of course, the 3a is far more practical than a laptop in the cramped confines of a cattle-class airline seat. For a start, there is no setting up involved: no rummaging in bags for peripherals, no waiting for boot-up—just whip it out and off you go. Its size also means that you can keep on typing when your *alleged* airline meal has arrived—try doing that with a laptop! As for battery life, I rest my case.

On a recent flight I was sitting next to a laptop user. Soon after take-off we both powered up our respective machines and started pecking away. About half way through the flight, he turned to me and asked "Excuse me, but what is that?"

It turned out that we had both been doing the same thing—writing business letters. By the end of the flight he wanted to swap machines. I declined, so he resolved to buy one at the earliest opportunity and divest himself of the hassle of carrying a laptop around all the time. Another Psion convert.

Psion in the USA

Here in the land of Uncle Sam and apple pie, computers are a little more pervasive than they are in good old Blighty. Software and hardware are generally more up-to-date, and the higher disposable income means that people have more to spend on 'Luxury' items like computers. It comes as something of a surprise, therefore, to find that the use of palmtop computers is not very widespread. In particular, Psion users out here are very thinly spread indeed.

There are several reasons for this. Firstly, Psion has a virtually non-existent profile over here. I have yet to see a TV advert for the product. Plenty of places sell them, but there is so little information available that most people are unable to make an informed buying decision. Psion is a largely unknown brand, even though, as I am fond of recounting, they've been making palmtop machines for years while the giants have been continually jumping in and out of the market with remarkable agility as fashions change.

I'm not denigrating the WinCE machines, but is seems to me that while doing the same sort of thing as the Psion they are larger, heavier, more expensive and consume more power than the 3a/3c, while providing relatively little new functionality. In a nutshell, they are slicker, but basically do the same thing. Of course later generations will be better, but they still have to compete with the Series 5.

About a year ago I walked into a branch of a nationwide electrical and electronics chain, to buy a 'boombox'. They had a 3a on display, along with a stack of flyers. A lady was trying to find out how the thing worked, and the store assistant was not much help as he didn't seem to know the product. Fearless Psion evangelist that I am, I waded boldly into the fray, and gave both of them a ten-minute tour of the product and its capabilities. She asked me how I knew so much about it, at which point I whipped mine out of my pocket and showed it to her. She bought one on the spot!

The assistant was so grateful that he offered me a job, which I politely declined, and a discount on my boombox as a small token of thanks, which I accepted.

Radio Shack is another case in point. Few of their stores stock Psion gear, and the chances are that the assistant knows little of their existence, but since it is in their catalog[ue], any store can order one for you. However, the prices are higher than average, and their range of extras is quite poor.

Psion USA really could do with a marketing push, along with perhaps the selection of a set of specialist dealers who really know the product. In a recent CompuServe thread on the subject, I learned that 1) Psion is not big enough to afford a national ad campaign and 2) they are selling the machines as fast as they can make them. It all makes perfect sense, I suppose, but I can't help thinking that there is a vast untapped market out here.

Psion have a head start in this market, and they have a legion of loyal evangelists. This kind of enthusiasm is rare in an industry rife with broken promises and I feel that if they could arrange for mini-shows with demonstrations and experts on hand to demonstrate the product they would sell quite a few of the little beasts. Many Psion machines have been sold through the best advertising of all—word of mouth.

The Psion Reference

If you would like to be included in this ever-expanding directory then please send details directly to *Palmtop* for free inclusion. If your entry is incomplete or incorrect then please update us!

Discussion Groups

UseNet Groups

comp.sys.psion.announce *comp.sys.psion.apps* *comp.sys.psion.marketplace*
comp.sys.psion.misc *comp.sys.psion.programmer* *comp.sys.psion.reviews*
comp.sys.psion.comm

CompuServe Psion discussion	Psion
CiX Psion conference	Psion
AOL - Psion Noticeboard	Psion/General noticeboard - Keyword: Psion

Psion Software

Imperial Archive FTP Site	*ftp://src.doc.ic.ac.uk/packages/psion/icdoc/*
Frontiernet FTP Site	*ftp://ftp.frontiernet.net/pub/psion*
New World Technology FTP Site	*ftp://ftp.nwt.com/*
Cityscape Psion Archive	*ftp://ftp.cityscape.co.uk/pub/psion/*

Usenet Binary Group	*comp.binaries.psion*
CompuServe Psion files area	*Psion* forum
CiX Psion files area	*/files* topic of the Psion conference

Psion FAQ

The Frequently Asked Questions document contains useful information, facts, names, addresses and numbers:

Posted monthly to the *comp.sys.psion.announce* newsgroup.

Available for FTP download from *news.answers* FTP sites, including rtfm.mit.edu/pub/usenet/news.answers/psion-faq/

An online version can be accessed from: http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/8130/faq.htm

Available by e-mail. Send an e-mail message to mail-server@rtfm.mit.edu with a message containing the lines "send usenet/news.answers/psion-faq/*" to receive all parts or send a message containing "help" and "index" for more information.

Bulletin Boards

User Group (UK)	+44 (0)1752 780100
Lonely Times (Germany)	+49 911 393 9034
User Group (The Netherlands)	+31 515 574188
Belgian Psion BBS	+32 3 2262079

Do you live in the Toronto area?

The PEAT mailing list (aka listserv) is an Internet-based mailing list for members and friends of the *Psion Enthusiasts' Association of Toronto*. To subscribe, send the message "subscribe peat" (no quotes) to listserv@ipsystems.com. Do *not* include a sig or tag line in your message.

The Software Directory

Machine key: 3=Series 3, a=Series 3a, c=Series 3c, s=Siena, 5=Series 5/Geofox One
Items marked with a star (*) have been added or updated since the last issue

Name	Notes	File name	Version	Size	Machine	Author	Price
Business							
Contact Edge	Contact manager	EDGE46.ZIP	4.6	76K	a/c	TCS/Ad Bosch	FREE
Plan	Project manager	PLAN.ZIP	4.2	102K	a/c/s	Andy Clarkson	£15
ProPoc	Project manager	PROPOP.ZIP	2.2	182K	a/c	Berthold Daum	A$99
*Psi-Tact	Contact manager	PSITAC23A.ZIP	2.3a	61K	a/c	Tony Crocker	£15
*Psi-Tact Siena	Contact manager	PSITACSL.ZIP	1a	39K	s	Tony Crocker	£7
Relate	Contact manager	RELATE10.ZIP*	1.0	19K	s	Ad Bosch	£10
Communications Software							
Faxit	Fax sender	FAXIT14.ZIP	1.4	28K	a/c	Walter Wright	£14
FreeVT	VT100 terminal emulator	FREEVT04.ZIP	0.4	19K	a/c	Nils Faerber	FREE
JBCIS	Add-on to ReadCIS	JBCIS.ZIP	1.2.2f	48K	a/c	John Boyce	FREE
Psion Dialler	Data add-on for travellers	DIALER.ZIP	3.21	40K	3/a/c/s	Protronics USA	$25
ReadCIS	Compuserve comms package	READCIS.ZIP	1.7.5	93K	a/c	David Keppler	£16/$25
ReadCIX	CiX comms package	READ49C.ZIP	4.9	109K	a/c	David Keppler	FREE
Termit	VT100 terminal emulator	TERMIT.ZIP	1.1	25K	a/c	Serge Shestopalov	£15
Websurf	Offline HTML browser	WEBSRF173.ZIP	1.73	40K	a/c	Arnaud Weil	£12
Conversion Packages							
Conversion Calc	Conversion package	CON3A.ZIP	6.1c	103K	a/c	T Bentinck	??
Convert 3	Conversion package	CONV11C.ZIP	1.1c	13K	3	P Synott	£8
Convert 3a	Conversion package	CONV41A.ZIP	4.1a	26K	a/c	P Synott	£8
Convert 2.1	Conversion package	CNV21.ZIP	2.1	27K	a/c	T Nemec	$10
ConVert 2	Conversion package	CNVT2-16.ZIP	1.6	9K	a/c	Jon Duff	£10
Toolkit 1	Conversion plus other utilities	n/a	n/a	n/a	a/c	Purple Software	£40
Database Applications							
DataImp	Video/music/photo DB	IMP120.ZIP	1.2	64K	a/c	Patrick Bell	£15
JBData	Database application	JBDATA.ZIP	1.5.1	66K	a/c	John Boyce	FREE
DataView	Database application	n/a	n/a	n/a	a/c	Purple Software	£35
DataView Pro	Uprated from DataView	n/a	n/a	n/a	a/c	Purple Software	£60
DataDeLuxe	Database application	n/a	??	n/a	a/c	Pocket & Soul	£50
Drawing Packages							
Draw	Draw	DRAW284.ZIP	2.84	60K	a/c	Rick Andrews	£10
DrawIt	Vector drawing	n/a	n/a	n/a	a/c	Purple Software	£40
Icon Draw	Draw icons	ICONDRAW.ZIP	1.1	5K	a/c	Jon Duff	£10
Paint & Compose	Draw/music	n/a	2.01F	128K	a/c	Widget Software	£40
PicPoc	Drawing	PIC3A.ZIP	2.67	109K	??	Berthold Daum	A$50
S3A Draw	Icon/picture editor	S3ADRAW3.ZIP	1.3	74K	a/c	Alan Richey	$15
SNA Draw	Icon/picture editor	SNADRAW0.ZIP	1.0	72K	s	Alan Richey	$15

File Managers

3T	File manager	3T_139.ZIP	1.39	15K	a/c	Roger Muggleton	FREE
3T (Siena)	File manager	3TS_101.ZIP	1.01	8K	s	Roger Muggleton	FREE
File Manager	Part of Toolkit 1	n/a	n/a	n/a	3/a/c/s	Purple Software	£40
Filer	File manager	FILER30.ZIP	3.0	84K	a/c	T Nemec	$30
JBTree	File manager	JBTREE.ZIP	4.2.6	33K	a/c	John Boyce	FREE
SnFile	File manager	SNFILE11.ZIP	v1.1	24K	s	Richard Wakelin	£10
Synchro	File Synchronization	SYNCHRO.ZIP	3.1	15K	a/c	Jean-Philippe Pasquier	$10
Utils 3a	File manager	UTILS2.ZIP	2.3	45K	a/c	G P Tappenden	??
X3Tree	File manager	X3TREE12.ZIP	1.21	42K	a/c	Richard Wakelin	£10

Finance Packages

Bank	Accounts package	BANK843.ZIP	8.43	18K	3	Pete Sipple	£5
Banker	Accounts package	n/a	2.0	??	??	Pelican Software	£60
BankPlus	Accounts package	BANKP22.ZIP	2.2	40K	a/c	Pete Sipple	£8
BankPlus	Accounts package	BANKS101.ZIP	1.1s	32K	s	Pete Sipple	£8
BankPlus	Accounts package	BP5_04.ZIP	0.4	32K	5	Pete Sipple	£8
Bill	Calculates bills	BILL2.ZIP	1.0	56K	a/c	Tom McGaw	£5.99
Bill (Siena)	Calculates bills	BILL1.ZIP	1.0	49K	s	Tom McGaw	£5.99
DP Bank	Accounts package	DPBANK16.ZIP	1.6	71K	a/c	Daniel Pfund	£10
Expense	Expense tracking	EXPENS10.ZIP	1.0	7K	3	Julius K Bjornsson	??
Finance Pack	Accounts package	n/a	4.20F	256K	a/c	Widget Software	£50
Financial Advisor	Mortgage/pension calculator	ADVISOR4.ZIP	4.0	5K	3/a/c/s	Gary Perlmutter	£7
Interest	Interest calculator	INTEREST.ZIP	1.0	4K	s	Tom McGaw	£2
Psion Money	Accounts package	n/a	??	n/a	a/c	Psion PLC	£50
S3A Bank	Accounts package	S3ABANK19.ZIP	1.9	257K	a/c	Alan Richey	$30
S5 Bank	Accounts package	S5BANK10.ZIP	1.0	390K	5	Alan Richey	$30
Sna Bank	Accounts package	SNABANK2.ZIP	1.2	240K	s	Alan Richey	$30
S3A Expenses	Expense account tracker	S3AEXP2.ZIP	1.2	66K	a/c	Alan Richey	$15
SNA Expenses	Expense account tracker	SNAEXP0.ZIP	1.0	66K	s	Alan Richey	$15
S3A Fuel	Fuel consumption monitor	S3AFUEL7.ZIP	1.7	42K	a/c	Alan Richey	$10
SNA Fuel	Fuel consumption monitor	SNAFUEL2.ZIP	1.2	40K	s	Alan Richey	$10
S3A Home	Home inventory	S3AHOME4.ZIP	1.4	44K	a/c	Alan Richey	$10
SNA Home	Home inventory	SNAHOME0.ZIP	1.0	44K	s	Alan Richey	$10
S3A Invest	Investment tracker	S3AINV14.ZIP	1.4	44K	a/c	Alan Richey	$10
SNA Invest	Investment tracker	SNAINV0.ZIP	1.0	44K	s	Alan Richey	$10
S3A Planner	Budget planner	S3APLAN5.ZIP	1.5	32K	a/c	Alan Richey	$10
SNA Planner	Budget planner	SNAPLAN1.ZIP	1.1	32K	s	Alan Richey	$10

General Utilities

Agenda Dump	Agenda reporting tool	AGDMP104.ZIP	1.04	17K	a/c	Simon Pooley	FREE
Alerts	Alert manager	ALERTS10.ZIP	1.0	16K	a/c	Max Bisschop	FREE
BusyView	Agenda monthly view	BUSYV141.ZIP	1.41	35K	a/c/s	Lieuwe de Vries	$25
DskUse	Requires MACSYS 2.0	DSKUSE.ZIP	1.3	6K	a/c	Lord Wodehouse	FREE
GBatt	Battery monitor	GBATT14b.OPA	1.4	10K	a/c	Max Bisschop	FREE
Geoclock	World daylight map	GEOCLOCK.ZIP	1.55	14K	a/c	John Davies	FREE
JB Active	Application manager	JBACTIVE19.ZIP	1.9.1	23K	a/c	John Boyce	FREE
JB Backup	Backup utility	JBCKUP12.ZIP	1.4	15K	a/c	John Boyce	FREE
JB Find	File locator	JBFIND.ZIP	2.7c	20K	a/c	John Boyce	FREE
JBResetM	Recover lost memory	JBRESETM.ZIP	?	4K	a/c	John Boyce	FREE
JBSort	Database sort	JBSORT13.ZIP	1.3b	12K	a/c	John Boyce	FREE
JWIN	Information and conversions	JWIN142F.ZIP	1.42F	25K	a/c/s	Phil Spencer	£5
LaunchPad	Application launcher	LPAD210F.ZIP	2.10F	18K	a/c/s	Phil Spencer	£5
MonthVu	AGENDA add-on	MONTHVU.ZIP	1.10D	27K	a/c	CESD	??

Outlook AGN. Sync.	Synchronizes Outlook 97	OUTLOOKS.EXE	0.4b	2.1M	a/c/s	Brian Cadge	$26
Pason	Password on startup	PASON4C.ZIP	4C	9K	a/c	A Lord	??
Procyon Light	Astronomy/planetarium	P_LHT202.ZIP	2.02	240K	a/c	Van Can/Sussenbach	- FREE
PsiOn	Password utility	PSI-ON20.ZIP	2.0	19K	a/c/s	Paul Hargreaves	£6
PassApps (Siena)	AGENDA/DATA password	PASAPPSN.ZIP	1.9F	9K	s	Phil Spencer	£5
PassApps (3a)	AGENDA/DATA password	PASAPP3A.ZIP	1.9F	9K	a	Phil Spencer	£5
PassApps (3c)	AGENDA/DATA password	PASAPP3C.ZIP	1.9F	9K	c	Phil Spencer	£5
S3A Task	To-do manager	S3ATASK2.ZIP	1.2	66K	a/c	Alan Richey	$15
Saikan	Japanese character (Kanji) dict.	SAIKAN13.ZIP	1.3	1M	a/c	Jamie Packer	FREE
Stopwatch	10mS resolution stopwatch	STPWT201.ZIP	2.01	8K	a/c	Simon Pooley	FREE
Stopwatch!	Basic stopwatch	SW.ZIP	1.05	5K	a/c	K McLoughlin	FREE
SysMemv2	Requires MACSYS 2.0	SYSMEM2.ZIP	2.0	6K	a/c	Lord Wodehouse	FREE
*TaskSwitcher	Windows-like task switcher	SWITCHER.ZIP	2.3	8K	3/a/c/s	Jean-Phillipe Reynauld	- $10
TimeMan	Time-related utilities	TMAN400F.ZIP	4.00f	50K	a/c	Phil Spencer	£10
Tone Pad	DTMF dialer/timer	TONEPD11.ZIP	1.1	10K	a/c	Simon Pooley	FREE
Ultimate Siena	Lottery and cheque programs	ULTIMATE.ZIP	1.0	4K	s	Tom McGaw	FREE
Unzip	ZIP file decompressor	FUNZIP.ZIP	1.4	10K	a/c	Jochen Siegenthaler	FREE

Macro Software

KMAC	Macro software	KMACRO.ZIP	??	64K	a/c	David Wood	??
MACSYS	Macro software	MACSYS.ZIP	2.0	40K	a/c	Tom Dolbilin	FREE

Miscellaneous applications

*AA World Travel Companion	Travel information	n/a	1.1	n/a	3/a/c/s/55	On-Board Info Ltd	£29.95
Colleague	Phone contact manager	COLLEAGUE.ZIP	1.5	15K	a/c/s	Ad Bosch	FREE
Facsman	Facilities management	FMAN143.ZIP	1.43	38K	a/c/s	Gary Bainbridge	£15
Fit4Life	Health and fitness	FIT4LIF3.ZIP	1.3	28K	3/a/c/s	Steve Litchfield	FREE
Geni	Family tree browser	GENI-120.ZIP	1.20	42K	a/c	Martin N Dunstan	£15
GolfCard	Golf database	GOLFC201.ZIP	2.01s	70K	s	M-P (Golf) Systems	£25
Graph 3a	Graph plotter	GRAF3A14.ZIP	1.4	36K	a/c	Gareth Wild	£8
*KallCost	Phone call timer	n/a	2.0.08	n/a	3/a/c	Pete Sipple	??
Kgene	Genealogy package	KGENE107.ZIP	1.07	21K	a/c	Kevin Groves	FREE
Linkwise	Connect to Novell Groupwise	n/a	1.1	n/a	a/c/s	Advansys	A$99.50
Lottery	Lottery program	LOTTERY.ZIP	1.0	3K	s	Tom McGaw	FREE
Lotto3a	Graphical lottery analyser	LOTTO422.ZIP	4.22	30K	a/c	Patrick Bell	£12
MemoVoc	Voice memo manager	n/a	3.0	n/a	a/c	David Joyce	£20
MyCar	Fuel consumption monitor	MYCAR416.ZIP	4.16	25K	a/c	Ad Bosch	£15
MyCar S5	Fuel consumption monitor	MYCAREN.ZIP	1.0	21K	5	Ad Bosch	£10
Notepad Deluxe	Notepad/utilities	n/a	??	n/a	a/c	Purple Software	£60
Polaris	Astronomy/sky chart	POLAR13.ZIP	1.3	200K	a/c	Achay Doan	$15
PUR	PowerUp memos	PUR130F.ZIP	1.30F	26K	a/c	Brendan W Breede	$20
Reader	Text reader	READER23.ZIP	2.3	83K	a/c	Barry Childress	??
Shoplist	Shopping list assistant	SLIST113.ZIP	1.13	34K	a/c	Hugh Matthews	£10
S3a Collect	Book/video collection mgr.	S3ACOLL2.ZIP	1.2	47K	a/c	Alan Richey	$10
Sna Collect	Book/video collection mgr.	SNACOLL0.ZIP	1.0	47K	s	Alan Richey	$10
Toolkit 1	Utilities	n/a	n/a	n/a	a/c	Purple Software	£40
Toolkit 2	Utilities	n/a	n/a	n/a	a/c	Purple Software	£40
Weight and Balance	Aviation utility	WTBAL.ZIP	1.0	7K	a/c	Graham Taylor	£15

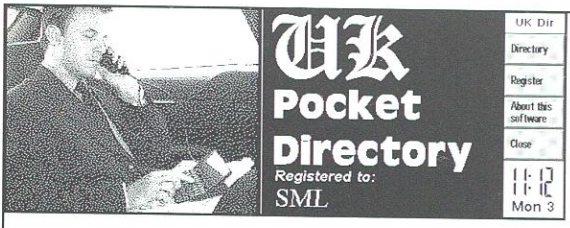
Mapping

*Autoroute Express	Route planning	n/a	1.0	n/a	a/c	Psion PLC	£65
*En Route	Route planning	n/a	1.0	n/a	a/c/5	Palmtop BV	various
GeoDIS	General mapping	GEO06PRG.ZIP	1.06	56K	a/c	Rolf Aeschbacher	£15
Geographical Database	- UK road atlas	GEODB.ZIP	1.5	600K	a/c	Keith Hollis	£34

GPS AutoRoute	GPS add-on for AutoRoute	AGPS10.ZIP	1.0	19K	a/c	Mike Rudin	FREE
GPS Mapping	GPS reader	GPSB0_09.ZIP	??	62K	a/c	Simon Taylor	FREE
Mapper GB	UK mapping	MAPS11.ZIP	1.1	83K	s	Steve Litchfield	£14
Mapper Ireland	Ireland mapping	MAPI15.ZIP	1.5	97K	a/c	Steve Litchfield	£9
MetroRER	Paris Metro	METRER.ZIP	1.1c	50K	a/c	??	150FFR
Nicholson London Pages - London information		n/a	n/a	n/a	a/c	Mobile Software	£19.95
Psigar	GPS utilities	PSIGAR29.ZIP	??	46K	a/c	??	??
Psi-Mapper	UK mapping	MAP5GB53.ZIP	5.3	106K	5	Steve Litchfield	£14
Psi-Mapper France	French mapping	MAPF11.ZIP	1.1	100K	a/c	Steve Litchfield	£14
Psi-Mapper GB	UK mapping	MAPA50.ZIP	5.0	106K	a/c	Steve Litchfield	£14
Psi-Mapper London	London mapping	MAPLO22.ZIP	2.2	126K	a/c	Steve Litchfield	£14
Psi-Mapper London	London mapping	MAP5LO23.ZIP	2.3	149K	5	Steve Litchfield	£14
Subway	London underground	SUBW1A.ZIP	1.0a	25K	a/c/s	Tat Tang	Charity
Tube 3a	London underground	n/a	1.04	120K	a/c	Simon Webb	£31.90
W2	World map	W2.ZIP	1.1	4K	3/a/c/s	John McAleely	FREE

Missed you?

Have we missed any of your products from this listing? If so, then either send the details to the Editor (see contact details on page 1), or preferably use the special online update form on our World Wide Web site to submit or update your entry.



To obtain either program, download them freely from the 3-Lib web site at 3lib.ukonline.co.uk or else send SAE, floppy disk and covering letter to: Steve Litchfield, 22 Grays Crescent, Woodley, RG5 3EN

UK Pocket Directory 1.5

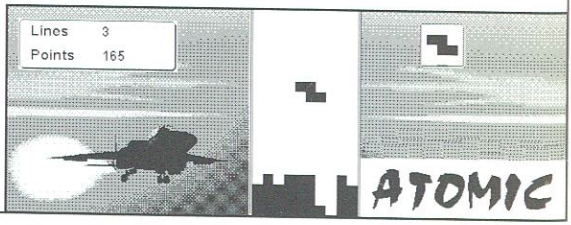
This is a huge UK-specific database. UK Pocket Directory gives access to information on Psion, general computer and Internet contacts, financial and adminstrative services, utilities (Gas, water, electricity etc), travel, tourism, rental and breakdown contacts, accommodation of all types, shopping & leisure contacts and services, attractions of all sorts and much, much more... Over 400KB of packed information!

Just think of a telephone yellow pages combined with hundreds of holiday brochures,dozens of roadside information leaflets, and all those info packs you get through the post from the people whose bills you pay. And now imagine all of that in a millimetre of silicon, sitting snugly in your Psion Series 5.That's what UK Pocket Directory is all about.

New Series 5 shareware from Steve Litchfield

Atomic v1.3

This is a fast and furious Tetris clone for the Psion Series 5. More gameplay per second than any other Series 5 game ever. And that's official. Prizes on offer in my Atomic high-score competition (see web site for details).



An introduction to SHAREWARE

In the pages of *Palmtop* you 'll read a lot about *'shareware '*. With the introduction of the Siena and now the Series 5 the shareware scene is getting much busier than before, but there are still many readers who 've never taken the plunge into the vast archives of Psion software. In an effort to make Shareware more accessible, here is a quick guide to what 's available, and how to get it...

What is shareware?

Written by professional programmers and enthusiasts to meet specific (and sometimes unusual) needs, shareware is normally supplied for use on a thirty day trial basis. If you like the software then you are expected to send a payment to the author. Each program comes with information on its use and cost.

Where do I get it?

- Via a modem. This is the best option, as you have access to a range of other services too. With a modem, you can 'download ' software to your desktop computer or direct onto your Psion machine. Where possible, look for a 28,800K (or higher) modem. If you 're new to the Internet, your best bet might be to connect via an Online Service such as *CompuServe, AOL* or *CiX* (in the UK) to get a feel for the way we communicate electronically. Many computer magazine cover disks contain the software you need. Connection via an *Internet Service Provider* brings a more direct connection, but can be difficult to set up. If you don 't wish to sign up with a service provider, the alternative is to download files from a bulletin board.
- From the *3-lib* shareware library. Shareware is supplied on 3.5" PC disc or copied direct onto an SSD. See the advertisement section for details.
- From a PC-format CD ROM. Available from leading Psion dealers, these discs contain stacks of useful programs and utilities.

How do I use it?

You 'll be able to obtain a list of what files are available from any of the above sources . Once you 've found the file you want, there are four steps to take:

1. Obtain the files. See above.
2. Uncompress the files. Psion applications normally have more than one component (i.e. the program itself,

help files and pictures). These are normally compressed into one file, which makes them easier to distribute. Shareware is most commonly compressed in 'Zip ' format, and you can recognise these by the '.ZIP ' at the end of the file-name. Before you can install and run the program, you need to extract these files with an 'unzip ' program. 'Unzippers ' are freely available from your shareware supplier. If you use DOS, look for *PKZIP*, Windows 3.1/95 users can use *Winzip*, and Mac users should try *Zipit*. You can unzip files on your Psion without using another computer, using either *PsiZip* or *S3UNZIP*.

3. Copy the files. You now need to transfer the unzipped files onto your Psion (unless you 're getting it on SSD). To do this you 'll need some external hardware, such as:

- Serial Lead (*3Link*). Connect your Psion to a desktop machine or a modem.
- Cyclone drive. Connect a 3.5" floppy disc drive to your 3a, 3c or Siena.
- SSD RAM drive. Copy programs to a RAM SSD via your PC 's printer port.

Normally, one of the unzipped software files is a text file (i.e. README.TXT), which explains how the program should be installed and where the files need to be copied to on your Psion. Most 3a/3c software comes in the form of an 'application ' file, and the .OPA or .APP file needs to live in the \APP\ directory.

4. Install the application. From your 3/3a/3c or Siena system screen, select <Psion><I>, and if the program was copied correctly the filename should appear in the list. Select it, press <Enter>, and your program should be installed and ready to run.

If there are any aspects of shareware that you think need more coverage then we 'd like to hear from you. Please send your comments and suggestions to me, care of *Palmtop*.

Pete Sipple - Petesipple@aol.com

Further reading

Shareware - What, Where & How - Page 43, Issue 6

Connecting your Series 3 - Page 41, Issue 5

Going on-line - Page 40, Issue 1

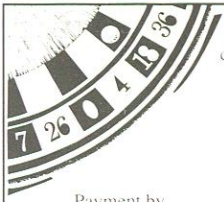
SSD Drive - Page 41, Issue 7

CD ROM - Page 20, Issue 7 ; Page 19, Issue 4

Cyclone - Page 14, Issue 7

PsiZip — Page 28, Issue 12

Get ALL the shareware featured in this issue on a floppy disk - see page 109

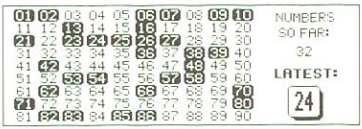


Only £10 each on your own 3.5" PC floppy disk or SSD. If you are sending an SSD please add £3 for registered delivery back to you

Payment by cheque/postal order (payable to M D Shuckford)

Contact:
M D Shuckford
75 North Quay
Great Yarmouth
Norfolk NR30 1JF
Tel: (01493) 856864 or 855648
Mobile: (0468) 360764

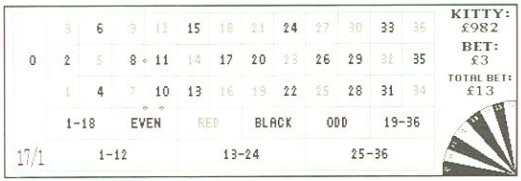
Bingo



- **Full bingo simulator for the Series 3/3a/3c**
- **Full 90 numbers displayed on screen**
- **Check last number(s) called**

Roulette (3a/3c only)

- **Change/delete bets**
- **Place multiple bets**
- **Wheel spin graphics**
- **Full auto-saving of games**
- **Double/halve/multiply your bets**



Keyboxes

- **24 boxes to open with up to 9 different keys**
- **1-6 players**
- **Load/save games**
- **Runs on Series 3/3a/3c**

POS Ltd

Pinnock Organiser Services offer you speedy and convenient service and repairs for your Psion machines and accessories. We are authorised by Psion and aim to provide the highest standards of service. Post your items to us with payment for return in 2-3 days or visit us by appointment.

PINNOCK ORGANISER SERVICES

Think Psion, Think P.O.S.itive

APPROVED PSION Service Centre

For customers wishing to have their Psions repaired, POS have relocated to:

143 Streatham High Road, London SW16 6EG ☎: 0181 677 9246
mobile: 0831 194985 fax: 0181 769 9293 e-mail: 106051.2651@compuserve.com

Please mention *Palmtop* when replying to advertisements

1MB RAM £165	2MB RAM £316	4MB RAM £531	1MB Flash £85	2MB Flash £133	4MB Flash £230	8MB Flash £395	16MB Flash £579

all prices exclude VAT

Christmas MADNESS offers!!

- Purchase a 4MB flash card & choose any 1 gift
- Purchase a 8MB flash card & choose any 2 gifts
- Purchase a 2MB RAM card & choose any 3 gifts
- Purchase a 4MB RAM card & choose any 4 gifts
- Purchase 4MB RAM+8MB flash & choose all 5!

Choose from these FREE gifts...

- 1 year subscription to Palmtop magazine
- Bison shareware CD-ROM (as reviewed in issue 14)
- SIU Fax software (see below)
- PsiWin Cable (for Series 3c/Series 5/Siena)
- Deluxe leather case

FREE!
PCMCIA adaptor with selected CompactFlash - ring for details!

All special offers subject to availability and substitution where necessary - all offers expire 31/12/97

Receive faxes on your 3a/3c!
—now works with Psion Travel Modem

Series 5 now shipping!
(yes—we DO have stock!)

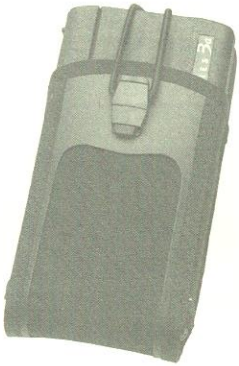
For 3a, 3c & Workabout: MC BOX 3

takes 2 x PCMCIA type II, SRAM or flash, built-in Centronics & RS232 ports

- *Full range of used SSDs available with limited warranty!*
- *Series 5 memory up to 32MB - ring for special offers!*
- ***We ship worldwide!***
- ***All cards carry a one year parts & labour guarantee, and are 100% compatible!***

The Ericsson GS18 data phone with built-in modem enables you to send and receive e-mail and faxes from your Series 3, Series 5 or laptop computer using only a single cable!

Ring us now for GPS prices, including full integration with your Psion, and copies of Psi-Mapper GB or Psi-Mapper France at reduced registration prices!



COVERTEC

Full range of Covertec™ cases now available for Series 5/3c/3a!

Ring for details

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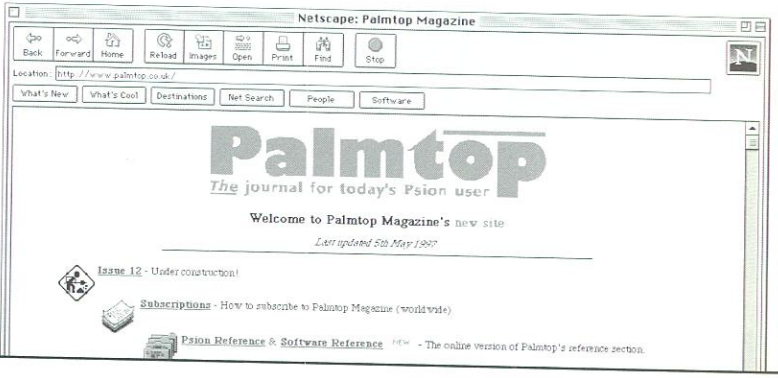
PSION USER GROUP

http://www.palmtop.co.uk/

Our WWW site has now been moved to a fast new server location, kindly provided to us by UK Online.



UK

If you're serious about your Psion, we're all you need to know.

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	backlit/2MB	£115	£230
Psion 3a	512K	£50	£100
	1MB	£75	£150
	2MB	£90	£180
Psion Siena	512K	£45	£90
	1MB	£60	£120
Psion 5	4MB	£275	£425
	8MB	£325	£450

COMMS		We Buy	We Sell
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PsiWin+cables	3a	£22	£45
	Siena/3c	£26	£52
Parallel cable	3a	£7	£15
3Fax	3a	£45	£90
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Telenote Link	Floppy	£7	£15
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Berlitz Phrasebook	SSD	£12	£25
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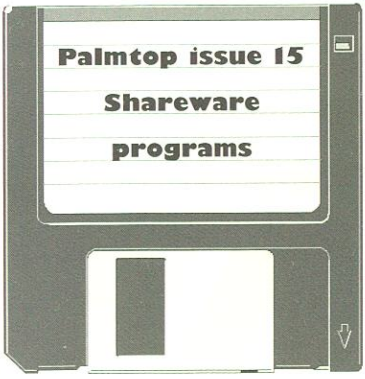
	Floppy	£14	£30
Notepad Deluxe	SSD	£15	£30
Professional Finance	SSD	£15	£30
Chess	SSD	£10	£20
Chess 3D	SSD	£15	£32
Scrabble	SSD	£15	£32
Other titles available		£Phone	£Phone

Terms and conditions: All equipment supplied with 3 month guarantee. Prices INCLUDE registered postage & insurance within UK. We only purchase items in full working order, without cosmetic damage. Buying prices apply to items with original boxes & manuals. Up to 20% discount will apply to equipment not meeting these standards. Prices correct at time of going to press. Offers subject to change without notice.

Can't find it?



The shareware and freeware programs featured in each issue of *Palmtop* are all available—either from the major FTP sites, authors ' WWW sites, or from the major online services.

As a service for *Palmtop* readers, *3-Lib* are offering a standard 3½" PC floppy disk containing *all* the programs featured in this issue for the benefit of anyone having difficulty finding what they need.

(cheques payable to Steve Litchfield)

Contact: 3-Lib Library, 22 Grays Crescent, Woodley, Reading RG5 3EN telephone: (0118) 9265081

Only £5 including worldwide postage!

Lost or stolen Psion?

It your Psion computer has been lost or stolen then you may be interested to know that a UK user has set up an independent worldwide service to keep track of the serial numbers of such machines. Here is the WWW address of the registry (which shows descriptions and serial numbers only—all personal information is kept offline):

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/groucho/

If you do not have WWW access then you can send details by post, or send an SAE for a printed list of missing machines. Please send your name, address, telephone number, description of item lost or stolen and serial number(s)

Address to send to is:

Mark Avey
39 Union Street
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL52 2JN

KallCost 3

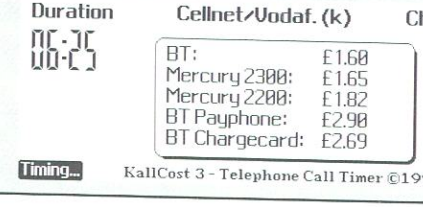
Stay in control!

Available as shareware, KallCost 3 for the Series 3a/3c allows you to stay in control of your telephone costs. Calculate the cost of international and mobile calls, keep a log of your calls and set warnings to keep your conversations short. Supplied with up-to-date tariff information and fully configurable.

For a fully working version of KallCost 3, plus copies of other programs for the 3a/3c, Siena and Series 5, send 3.5" disk together with a stamped addressed envelope to: Pete Sipple, Top Floor, 17 Devereux Road, Southend-on-Sea SS1 1DR

Available from http://members.aol.com/petesipple/kallcost.htm & usual shareware sources. Email psipple@cix.co.uk for full details

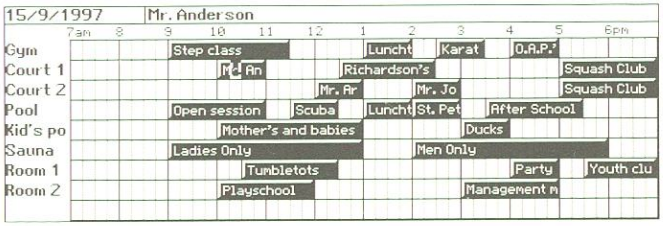
- ¥ Time telephone calls
- ¥ Calculate call charges
- ¥ Compare telephone tariffs
- ¥ Control mobile phone bills
- ¥ Log your expenditure
- ¥ Small and easy-to-use



Effective Advertising —the solution

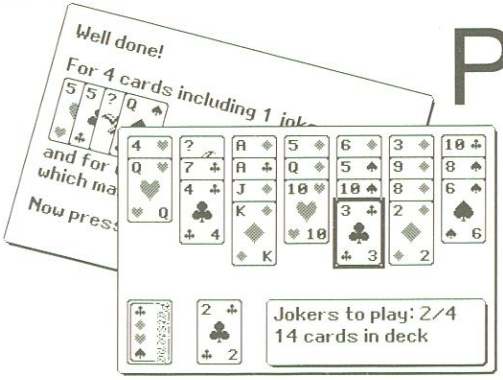
If you sell or manufacture goods for Psion users then you need an effective place to advertise your products. The page you are now reading *is* such a place. Read by thousands of enthusiastic Psion owners in almost 70 countries around the globe, you won't find a more cost-effective forum to reach so many serious Psionites. For more details of how to advertise in *Palmtop* and of our special low rates for shareware authors, please contact the Editor at the address on page 1.

Who's in Court 1? *When is the Gym available?* *Where's the Party?*



See at a Glance with Facilities Manager

Available from *http://www.cix.co.uk/~bainb/facsman.htm* or from *3-Lib*



Patsiena!

patience on your Siena

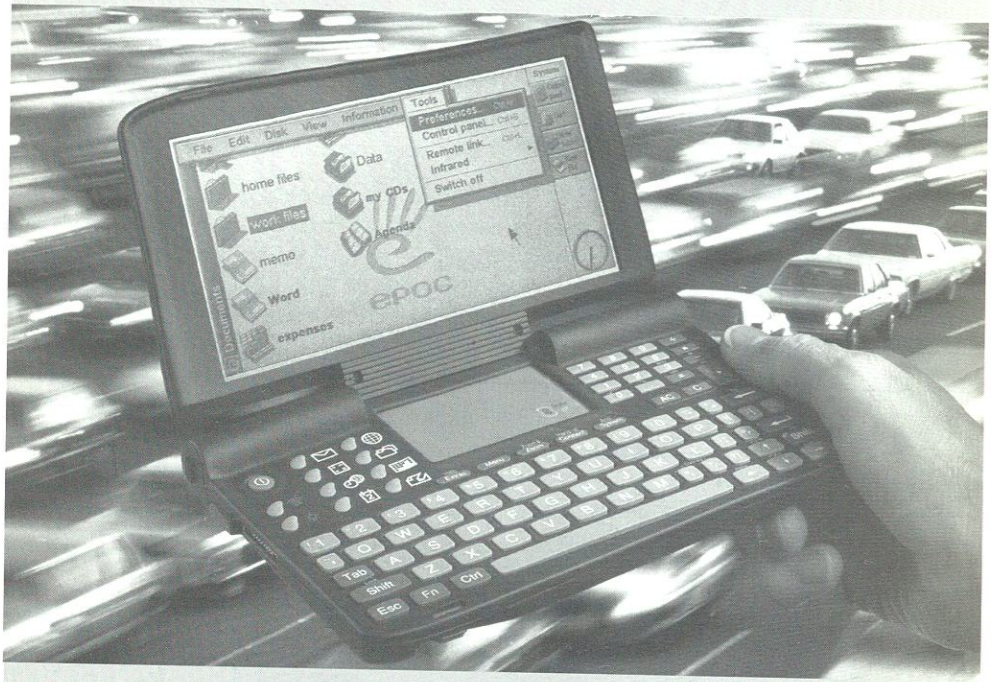
Try the shareware, then register for £10 only if you like it. (£14 in non-UK currency)

Either send a stamped addressed envelope and PC floppy

Mark Wheadon
31 Primrose Way
Whitstable
Kent
CT5 3QW, UK

or visit http://www.ukc.ac.uk/php/mcw

welcome to mobile computing



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(Note: 'S3A' programs (i.e. S3ABANK) also run on the Series 3c

S5BANK, S3ABANK & SNABANK Personal Accounts Suite £20 (30US$)

The most comprehensive Shareware financial package available for the Psion Series of palmtop computers, with well over 2000 registered users. As well as the usual financial functions, including full Quicken compatibility, both Import and Export, this program also includes (for free) the following 5 programs as fully-integrated optional modules.

S3AEXP & SNAEXP Expense Account Monitor £10 (15US$)

This program allows you to monitor your Expense Account, allocating entries to categories and reconciling them once they are claimed. It also includes an optional company car monitor, where usage can also be allocated to categories.

S5FUEL, S3AFUEL & SNAFUEL Fuel Consumption Monitor £7 (10US$)

This program allows you to track the fuel consumption for up to 10 vehicles. It is fully configurable, allowing entry and/or display in miles/kilometers and litres/galls. Full details of the previous entries are available, as well as a graphical representation.

S5AHOME, S3AHOME & SNAHOME Home Inventory Monitor £7 (10US$)

This program allows you to keep track of the value of your household possessions for insurance purposes. It is based on the Home Inventory module produced for Quicken. At regular intervals you can update all the Items for inflation, and print out the details.

S3AINVEST & SNAINVEST Investment Performance £7 (10US$)

This program allows you to keep track of up to 50 investments. The main screen holds all the details of each investment, including latest price and total value of the portfolio. A second screen then gives a graphical representation of the historical performance.

S5NOTES Note Taker / Jotter program £7 (10US$)

This program is designed to give the Series 5 an equivalent to the 'Jotter' application on the Series 3c. it allows you to quickly enter notes without having to open up a WORD file specially. It is designed to sit in the background and be called forward with a 'short-cut key'.

S5TASK & S3ATASK Extended ToDo Manager £10 (15US$)

This program allows you to use an alternative method to the Agenda for recording and managing your tasks that have to be accomplished. It breaks down large projects into tasks of manageable size, categorising,setting priorities, sorting and ordering them.

S3ADRAW & SNADRAW Drawing/Icon Viewer/Editor £10 (15US$)

This program allows you to view, edit or design pictures and icons. It comprises three components, a Picture Viewer, a Picture Editor and an Icon Editor. These allow you to view existing pictures or design, create, and edit bitmap picture or Icons

S3ACOLLECT & SNACOLLECT Collection Manager £7 (10US$)

This program allows you to handle a database of a collection such as records, stamps, books, etc. The difference with this program is that as well as the labels being configurable, the screen display, printout and sorting method are also fully configurable.

F A Richey 6001 Natick Court Burke, VA 22015 USA	E-Mail: alanrichey@compuserve.com All the programs are available on the World Wide Web at: http://members.aol.com/alanrichey or on CompuServe, America Online & CIX or send a 3.5" disc & stamped addressed envelope to one of these addresses (specifying the platform required)	F A Richey C/O Sonas Calgary Isle of Mull Argyle PA75 6QT SCOTLAND

Please mention *Palmtop* when replying to advertisements

At last a book providing a complete guide to software development for the whole Psion palmtop range, including Series 5

Anyone interested or involved in programming Psion computers will benefit from this 600+ page book and the free CD-ROM. Together they form a huge collection of program code examples, complete applications, advice on techniques, file format details, utilities and numerous other resources.

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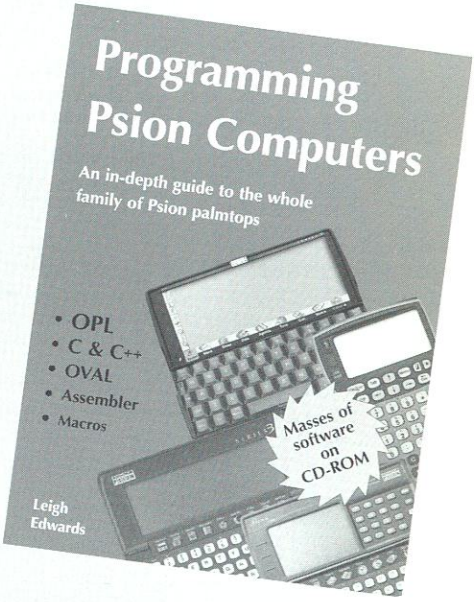

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designed for PSION

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EXPORTECH

Next issue...

Planned for issue 16:

Including everything we couldn't squeeze into this bumper review issue...

- We take a look around Psion's Technical Support department
- Outlining in WORD on the 3a/3c/Siena. Learn how to use this useful and flexible feature
- Sound on the Series 5. How to get the most from it, and some new software...
- A roundup of the best games ever written for the Series 3a/3c
- Mobile telecommunications with a 3a/3c or Series 5 and an Ericsson GS18
- Lots of reviews, training videos and courses, Pocket Quicken vs S5Bank, The Mobile Pages Generator and much more...

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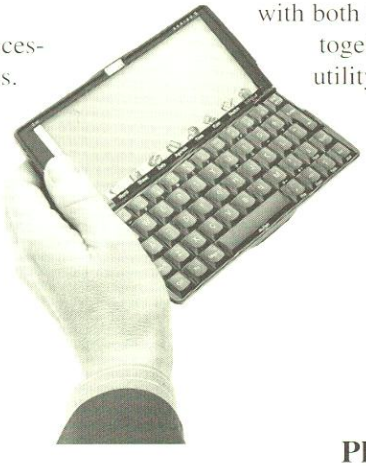

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"A super-slick piece of software" *Palmtop Magazine, issue 11*

Installation allows you quickly to select the countries and categories of information relevant to you which are then automatically inserted into Agenda on the correct date

Technical Requirements		
	PC:	Microsoft Windows 3.1 or later
	Psion/Siena:	Serial cable link to PC. Typical dates selection uses 25kb storage

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